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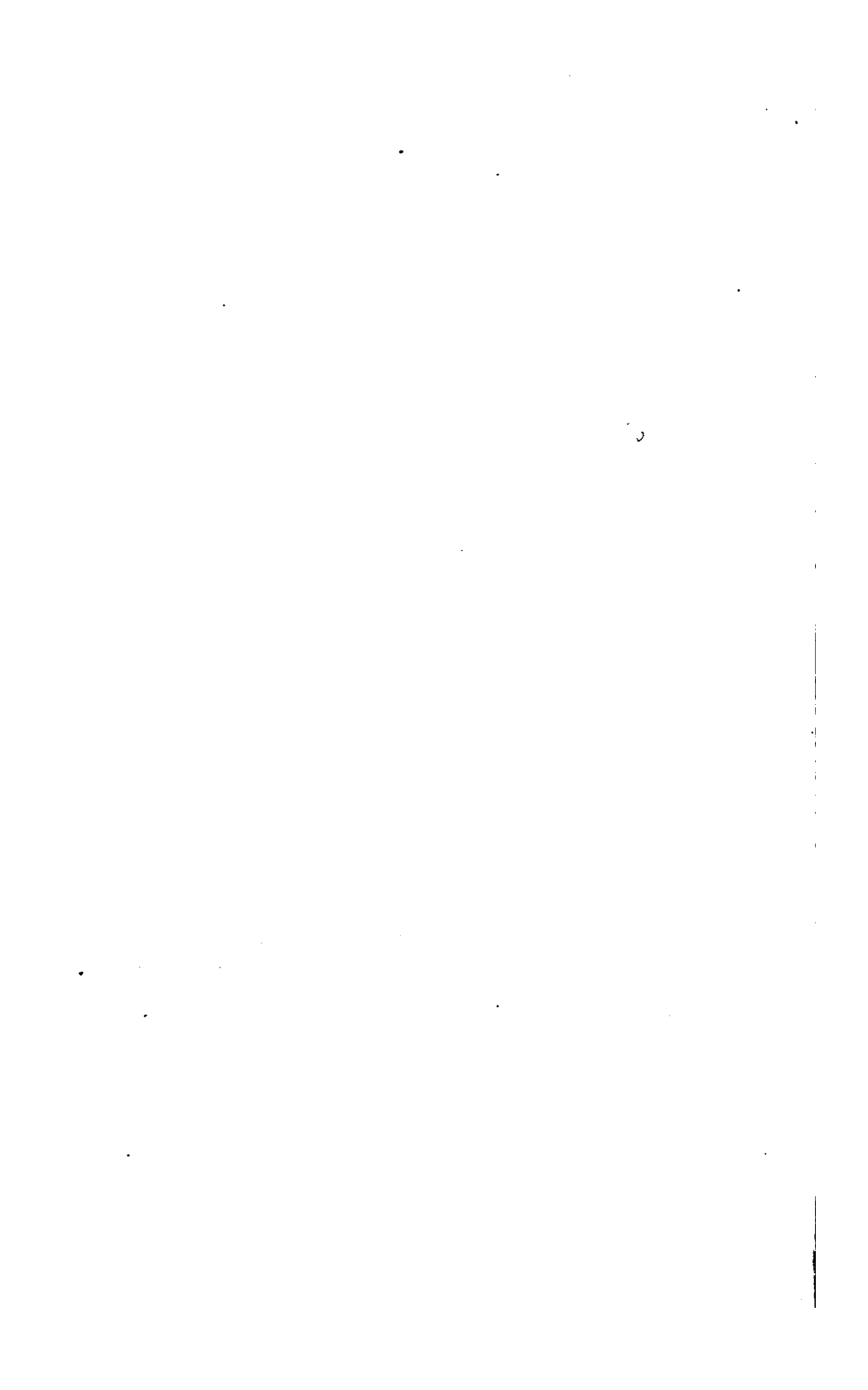
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A SKETCH
OF THE
HISTORY OF ERASTIANISM.



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A SKETCH
OF THE
HISTORY OF ERASTIANISM;
TOGETHER WITH
TWO SERMONS
ON
THE REALITY OF CHURCH ORDINANCES,
AND ON
THE PRINCIPLE OF CHURCH AUTHORITY.

BY
ROBERT ISAAC WILBERFORCE, A.M.,
ARCHDEACON OF THE EAST RIDING.

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HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF

THE SYSTEM OF ERASTIANISM.

RELIGION addresses itself so directly to the inner nature, and is so much concerned with the feelings and duties of individuals, that men are apt to attach inferior interest to its public concerns and collective character. And yet there are occasions when these likewise require attention. The Christian faith was originally proclaimed as the germinant principle of a society; and it cannot be otherwise than important that it should be perpetuated among ourselves under conditions not inconsistent with its original constitution and organic laws. This is matter of especial concernment to the clergy, who are bound by solemn engagements to "minister the Doctrine and Discipline of Christ," not only "as this Church and realm hath received the same," but likewise "as the Lord hath commanded." And obvious circumstances make the subject peculiarly interesting at the present day.

Under this feeling it is that I propose to make some remarks on the History of Erastianism. By Erastianism I understand that system of opinions and that course of action, which deprive the Church of Christ of independent existence, and resolve it into a function of the civil government. It is the more needful to consider the nature of this system, because by many it has been supposed to be involved in an admission of the Royal Supremacy. Hence it has often been supposed that the Church of England designed to surrender her liberty to the temporal power, and that the clergy are inconsistent when they assert their independence. But the characteristic features and essential principle of Erastianism can hardly be understood, without some knowledge of the circumstances which have led to its prevalence. For this purpose we must go back to those great events which convulsed Europe during the sixteenth century. I propose, then, to consider—first, what principles of Church authority were engendered either here or abroad by the Reformation; secondly, how these principles gave birth to the system of Erastianism; thirdly, what effects have followed from its predominance.

CHAPTER I.

THE EPISCOPAL SYSTEM, OR THE THEORY OF
 CHURCH AUTHORITY DURING THE AGE FOLLOW-
 ING THE REFORMATION.

To conduct this inquiry with advantage, we must first consider in what Church authority consists. It resolves itself into two parts—the first relating to persons, the second to things. Since the Church is a society, it belongs to Church authority to give men commission to exercise public functions—the function, *i. e.*, of ministering Sacraments and Sacramentals. This power depends—first, upon ordination; and, secondly, upon the continuance of the commission bestowed in ordination. Thus arise Orders and Mission. Again, it belongs to Church authority to settle what persons shall be allowed to partake in the ordinances thus administered, *i. e.*, to regulate admission to communion. And further, among those who have commission to minister, some must be selected who shall be presented to the authorizing power for employment in this or that place. This is the right of patronage. So that the exercise of Church authority has reference to Orders, Mission, Communion, and Patronage.

But Church authority involves also a question of things. For the Church was instituted not only that Sacraments and Sacramentals might be ministered to its members, but likewise for the maintenance of that Faith, which was once for all delivered to the Saints. Hence the preaching of the pure word of God is laid down in our Articles to be as necessary a condition of the Church's existence, as the right administration of Sacraments. Now, the practical settlement of this question will commonly arise in the adjudication of disputes which grow out of the rights of persons; questions of doctrine will commonly be tested by the acceptance or rejection of those who hold it: and this is the very circumstance which renders it so important that the rights of persons should be properly regulated. Strictly speaking, however, the interpretation of doctrine is a question of *things*: it is the determination what is and what is not to be received as the Church's decision. So that the question arises, who settles the Church's faith?—whether legislatively by the formation of laws, or judicially by their interpretation. And, therefore, the subject-matter of Church authority may be classed under five heads: 1, Orders. 2, Mission. 3, Communion. 4, Patronage. 5, Interpretation of doctrine.

The first question before us is to whom these powers were assigned, after the Reformation, in the different countries which separated themselves from Rome. There were plainly three claimants among whom they might be divided—first, the clergy, as possessing a commission from Christ; secondly, the

whole body of Christians, as possessing paramount authority either by revealed appointment, or natural right; and, thirdly, the temporal power. Of what did these claimants severally become possessed, and how was it assigned to them?

We should form a false estimate of events at that period, if we supposed that men were fully alive to the greatness of the transition which they witnessed, and forecast the new aspect which has since been presented by the Christian world. That great changes were going on, and that new rulers were coming in the place of old ones, was manifest; but no one seems to have imagined that the principle of authority itself was about to be endangered. From the time that the old heretical bodies had died out, there had been no such thing as different religious persuasions in western Europe; the whole west had been "of one language and of one mouth." Great dissatisfaction, indeed, had existed among the Lollards, but they could not openly avow their opinions, and had no common bond of union. Now it does not seem to have occurred to men in any country of Europe that this system was about to cease. Established usages, indeed, underwent great changes in various countries, but the submission of the private to the national mind was not relaxed. The idea that individual intellect was to supply the place of common consent in the interpretation of scripture, seems hardly to have existed. Those who took a larger view of things, indeed, could not fail to see that the different courses pursued by different nations might lead to the disruption of the European family.

When Sir Thomas More was pressed by the Privy Council to assent to the Oath of Supremacy, the Abbot of Westminster said to him, "You ought to think your conscience erroneous, when you have against you the whole council of the nation." "I should," replied More, "if I had not for me a still greater council, the whole council of Christendom." Yet when the rapid progress of the Reformed opinions is remembered, there seems to have been nothing unnatural in the expectation that the Church would still continue to be of one mind, but that the new maxims of Luther and Calvin would supersede the old ones of St. Leo and St. Gregory. It seemed that the time was come for that general reformation of abuses "*in capite et in membris*," which had been demanded by the Councils of Basle and Constance a hundred years before. The members of all the reformed communities clearly supposed themselves to make up one body in their opposition to the ancient system. As early as 1530 Henry VIII. had sent ambassadors to propose a compact with the German Princes, who had assumed the name of Protestant in their league at Smalcald, and German envoys were in England for this purpose in 1538; the plan of a combination of all the reformed was afterwards repeatedly agitated by Cranmer: the letters of our principal divines to the Swiss reformers during the reign of Elizabeth, assume the virtual union of all who were opposed to the Church of Rome; and the same feeling was prolonged even under the Stuart Princes. James I. sent his delegates to the Synod of Dort, and letters from Mr. Dury, who devoted

himself to the hope of uniting the Protestant world, are preserved in the works of Mede, who notices how the design was checked by that clearer view of the position of the English Church, which was then becoming predominant.¹ The idea was revived by Spenser and Burnet in the next generation.²

If this hope was entertained by men whose views extended themselves to the whole family of European nations, still more was it by those whose attention was confined mainly to their own country. There was not an indication of any *hiatus*, which separated one system from another. There was no barrier to pass, like the pillar at the Isthmus, which proclaimed, this is not Peloponnesus, but Ionia. The Churches were opened from week to week as they had been wont. In this country, at least, Ecclesiastical Discipline continued to be ministered by the same officers as formerly, and according to the same laws. Attendance upon public worship was enforced upon individuals by the old rules,³ at the very moment when the centres of religious obedience were shifted and displaced. When the new Communion office was introduced in the first year of Edward VI., the Royal Proclamation assumed that the whole nation would move together. The king willed every man

¹ Mede's Works, p. 865, Lett. 80. The English Minister, at Paris, who had been accustomed to attend the French Protestant Service at Charenton, was desired to desist from so doing in Charles 1st reign.—*Clarendon*, iii. 366.

² Pfaff's *Origines Juris Eccles.* p. 294.

³ The Act which authorized King Edward VI's Second Book, (5 and 6 Edward VI., c. i. s. 2.), required all persons to attend their Parish Church upon Sundays and Holidays, upon pain of punishment by the censures of the Church.

"with such obedience and conformity to receive this our ordinance and godly devotion, that we may be encouraged from time to time further to travel for the reformation, and setting forth of such godly orders, as may be most to God's glory, the edifying of our subjects, and for the advancement of true religion. Which thing we (by the help of God), most earnestly intend to bring to effect; willing all our loving subjects in the mean time, to stay and quiet themselves with this our direction, as men content to follow our authority (according to the bounden duty of subjects) and not enterprising to run afore, and so by their rashness become the greatest hinderers of such things, as they, more arrogantly than godly, would seem (by their private authority) most hotly to set forward."⁴

It is to these circumstances, probably, that we must attribute the readiness with which men accepted the great changes of that period. The King and the Pope had always in a measure been rival powers. The recognition of the Royal supremacy seemed to be a mere abstract question, and so long as the detail of personal duties continued unaltered, it made little difference apparently, to the mass of men, which side predominated.

It was not during the excitement of the change therefore, that we must look for any clear appreciation of its principles or extent. But when a new generation had grown up in the seats of learning, what was the order of things, which they were called upon to defend? Those countries of Europe, which

⁴ Wilkins, iv. 11.

had separated themselves from the Roman obedience, were in one or other of the following conditions; where the government was democratic, or where the ruler had opposed the change, the Presbyterian system of Church government was predominant; while on the other hand the Royal Supremacy was acknowledged in monarchical states, where the princes had concurred in the Reformation. The former was the case in Holland, Switzerland, Scotland, and France: the latter in England and Germany. In the first case the authority which was taken from the clergy had been vested in the whole body of Christians; in the second, a portion of it had passed to the crown. In consequence it will be found that Presbyterianism, to whatever other evils it is open, is at least a deadly enemy to Erastianism: Beza was the first to write against Erastus, and no ecclesiastical body is more hostile at present to the encroachment of the civil power than the Scottish Kirk. The danger, which we have to point out, will be found to have originated where circumstances gave things an opposite direction, and our thoughts therefore must be turned to those monarchical countries, in which the concurrence of the civil ruler led to the recognition of the Royal Supremacy. Here we must see what power was vested in the Sovereign, and whether it interfered with the exercise of those functions, which are inherent in the Church.

The principle avowed in the age following the Reformation, both in England and Germany, was that the powers exercised by princes had not been *given* but only *restored* to them by that event. This

assertion was put prominently forward by Parliament in the title to the 1st Eliz. 1, but was not less distinctly maintained by divines in Germany. In that country the assertion was founded upon the arrangements made at the treaty of Passau, A. D. 1552, and subsequently confirmed by the Diet of Augsburg, A. D. 1555. The terms then agreed upon excluded the imperial authority from interfering in any way with the religious affairs of the several German States. But as the people were not released from subjection to their local rulers, each subordinate prince proceeded to establish and enforce that form of religion, which himself approved. Hence the maxim, which was current in Germany, "*cujus est regio, illius est religio.*"⁵ Its effects may be seen to this day in the Rhenish provinces of Prussia. The Roman Catholic system prevails in the Electorate of Cologne, because the Archbishop expelled all Protestants from his dominions: but on crossing the river to Elberfeld or Dusseldorf, the traveller sees the result of that religious toleration, which was adopted in the dukedom of Berg. Now, since Germany was an empire, in which certain spiritual princes possessed authority, it was maintained that they must have been parties to this change, and therefore that the ecclesiastical power which the Bishops had formerly possessed had *devolved* with their assent upon the German princes. Such was the original explanation of the theory of Church government, which was adopted in Protestant Germany, and which was

⁵ Reinkingk de regim. secul. et eccles. 1619, vide Stahl's Kirchenverfassung de Protestanten.—p. 27.

called the *Episcopal System*, in consequence of the rights, which it supposed princes to possess. But as it was notorious that the Bishops had not really been parties to the arrangement, a more plausible justification was speedily discovered; namely, that the powers which devolved upon princes by the Treaty of Passau had originally been theirs, until they had been robbed of them by the usurpation of the Bishops; so that the treaty had only restored authority to its lawful possessors. Such is the explanation of the Lutheran system, which is given by Gerhard,⁶ Reinkingk, and other principal authorities for above a century after the Reformation.

Now, since it was on all hands acknowledged that a regular ministry had existed from the times of the Apostles, it was necessary to find some place for the clergy in an *Episcopal System*, which professed to do nothing but restore his ancient authority to the prince. Hence it became an established part of this system that its authority could only be exercised through the clergy; who possessed an exclusive right, both in the administration of sacred offices, and in the settlement of doctrine. The Prince, indeed, was possessed of Supreme spiritual authority both in respect of persons and in respect of things; but in him it lay as it were in the mine; and none but his clergy could work it out, and apply it to those practical purposes, which brought it home to the affairs

⁶ Gerhard speaks of the powers, "quæ per Passoviensem pacificationem ipsis (i. e. the Bishops), velut injustis possessoribus erepta, et christiano et pio magistratui restituta sunt," and Stryk says, "communis hæc doctorum opinio est, non accepisse sed recepisse id principes."—*Stahl*, p. 10.

of life. Such was the theory of the *Episcopal System*, as explained by the celebrated divine Carpzovius, in whom it reached its full development. "Church government," he maintained, "and especially the maintenance of true doctrine, belongs peculiarly to the body of teachers: the people have no part in Church authority, or in the maintenance of doctrine; and even the Prince has only an external authority, inasmuch as he only co-operates externally [*extrinsecus concurrit*], to the maintenance of religion, the filling of offices, the calling of Synods, the restraining of heretics, and other acts of Church power. The Prince must take care therefore that he confines himself to the external side of Church authority, and does not interfere with its inner portion, which belongs to the ministers; and again that even as respects external matters, in difficult questions, he consults ecclesiastical ministers."⁷

It is not to the present purpose to inquire whether in Germany this was more than a mere theory, by which the harsh features of a religious tyranny were rendered less revolting. As it existed in England, however, there can be no doubt that the *Episcopal System* was a reality. The obvious difference between this country and Germany arose from the actual preservation of that office in England, of which the German theory only assumed the name. And with the Episcopal office had been perpetuated all those rights and duties, those traditions and usages [unless incompatible with Saxon law], which the Courts Spiritual had been accustomed to enforce before the

⁷ Stahl's Kirchenverfassung der Protestanten, i. i. p. 19.

Reformation. Let us consider then what this system was in England: how much it assigned to the clergy, and how much to the Crown.

Church authority has been said to involve a question of persons, and a question of things. How far did the Crown interfere in either? It left the ministration of Orders untouched. Mission may mean either the spiritual commission, which is derived from the Church, or the temporal permission to live in a certain locality. There might have been a more direct statement that the Crown did not arrogate to itself the first; but there is no direct assertion, which attributes to it more than the second. The question of Communion was supposed to be left as formerly to the Courts of the Bishops. The right of patronage was rested on the fact of ancient endowment by the Preamble of 24 Henry VIII. § 12; as it had been long before by the Statute of Provisors, 23 Ed. III. § 6, 1 and 3. Neither can any objection be made to the exercise of lay patronage, so long as it is based upon this principle. But it was on the other branch of the subject, the question namely of things, that the real controversy was dependent; because on this it rested how the Church's belief was to be decided. And out of this it is that all questions respecting persons have in fact arisen. Now here, too, nothing can be more distinct than the general statement, that all matters of doctrine are to be decided by the Church, by virtue of that divine commission to teach, with which it was invested by Christ Our Lord. Such is the declaration in the 20th Article, that "the Church

hath authority in controversies of faith." If it be said that this statement means nothing, because it does not define the method in which the Church is to express its will, the answer is, that those who put forth the Articles showed clearly enough to whom they supposed that the expression of the Church's mind belonged. For they are styled the "Articles agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both Provinces, and the whole clergy, in the Convocation." Now either the statement that "the Church hath authority in controversies of faith" is deceptive and signifies nothing, or else there must be some means through which this function is discharged; and if such means exist, what could the parties who agreed upon the Articles suppose them to be, except those which they themselves adopted?

But if any doubt occurs in respect to this expression, none can attach to the Preamble of 24 Henry VIII. 12, which states that "this realm of England is divided in terms and by names of spirituality and temporalty," "the body spiritual whereof having power, when any cause of the law divine happened to come in question, or of spiritual learning, then it was declared, interpreted, and showed, by that part of the said body politic called the spirituality, now being usually called the English Church." And a similar assertion of the right of the Church's officers to express her mind occurs in the 139th and 140th Canons, A. D. 1603; which, though not enforced upon the laity by the temporal courts, are yet enforced by the Church's Courts on all over whom they have jurisdiction, and are therefore binding in conscience

upon her members, as the expression of her mind. These Canons were plainly a turning point in the history of the Church of England, for they first required the clergy to give their assent to the Book of Common Prayer (by Canon 36), which having been composed and employed under Royal order, was now for the first time accepted by the Spiritual Body. Now the 139th Canon affirms under penalty of excommunication, that "the sacred Synod of this nation, in the name of Christ, and by the King's authority assembled, is the Church of England by representation;" the 140th affirms that all persons "either of the Clergy or Laity are subject to the decrees thereof in causes ecclesiastical; while the 141st claims the title of a Synod for the representatives of the clergy then gathered together.

Here, then, are distinct affirmations of the principles laid down by Carpzovius as essential to the *Episcopal System*; that the settlement of doctrine lies with the body of clergy. Other particulars might be mentioned. Such are the statements in the Ordinal that Bishops have authority by the law of God, as contradistinguished from that which is conferred upon them by the law of the land: and the royal declaration prefixed to the Articles, "that the Bishops and Clergy shall have license to deliberate of such things as shall concern the Doctrine of the Church of England," in order "that the churchmen may do the work which is proper unto them." There remains one important consideration, viz., that the interpretation of doctrine depends as really upon the judicial, as upon the legislative power.

Now, though the determination of ordinary cases was left to the Bishop's Courts, yet the 25th Henry VIII., 19, had fixed the decision on appeal in the king's delegates; while the 1st Elizabeth 1, had authorized the appointment of the High Commission Court, which exercised the right of interfering with all ecclesiastical discipline according to its own discretion. But then our kings had been parties to those statements which affirmed that the settlement of doctrine lay in the Church; they might be expected, therefore, to leave questions of this nature to its decision;⁸ and in point of fact, all such questions were decided according to Church law, and by Ecclesiastical Judges till the Great Rebellion.

These statements might almost induce a belief that the powers, which were said to be *restored* to the crown at the reformation, were not of any material importance. But we must look at the other side also. The most important point doubtless of a contrary kind was one which has been recently insisted upon by Mr. Goode, as a proof that the English reformation was not effected by the Church's authority. The Book of Common Prayer, he observes, containing the Catechism, which supplied the ordinary instruction of the people, was put forth by Edward VI., and subsequently modified both by Elizabeth and James I., without the Church's sanction. It had been usual in ancient times for individual Bishops to settle the liturgical forms in their own

⁸ "The provision suggested for Appeals in the *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum* was either to a few Bishops, or to the Provincial Synod."—*De Appell.*, sec. ii. p. 283.

dioceses, but this had been done by spiritual authority ; and that the mode of worship should be altered at the direction of the sovereign, even though he employed Bishops and Clergy as his subordinates, must be allowed to have been a serious infringement of the principle that the settlement of that, which was to be believed, rested with the spirituality. Indeed, the proclamation of James I., previous to the Hampton Conference, claimed a right of determining such questions, wholly irrespective of the interpretive office of the Church. " We will proceed according to the laws and customs of this realm, by advice of our council, or in our high court of parliament, or by convocation of our clergy, as we shall find reason to lead us." And there had been many individual concessions on the part of the clergy, which had given countenance to the notion that the crown possessed an absolute power in the settlement of that which was to be received as true doctrine. Such was the Oath of Supremacy, as taken during the reign of Edward VI., by which the clergy bound themselves to observe " all and singular acts " " made or *to be made* in confirmation and corroboration of the king's power of the supreme head in earth of the Church of England." Such a promise implied that the enacting authority was without limit, and might prescribe such terms of belief as it pleased. And somewhat similar may be said of various circumstances during the same reign, which seemed too like an acknowledgment that spiritual mission was derived from the crown. Such was the statement in the *Reformatio Legum*

* Wilkins, iv. p. 371.

Ecclesiasticarum, that all ecclesiastical jurisdiction was derived from the crown;¹⁰ the declaration in the beginning of the same book (p. 1), that the law-making office in respect of Church matters lay in the sovereign; and the fact that the Bishops took out new commissions for the exercise of their office from the young king. To these may be added such declarations as that of Cranmer,¹¹ that the clergy held their sacred offices exclusively by delegation from the king, and that no specific gift or right was conferred by ordination: as well as the practical interference of Elizabeth and James when Parker was consecrated, and when Grindal and Abbot were suspended. For let it be once admitted that spiritual mission is derived from the temporal power, and since it is plain that the authority which commits a trust has a right to withhold it, it will follow that to decide upon the doctrinal competency of those, who are employed to teach, belongs to the civil and not to the spiritual power. And thus will the determination of doctrine become a matter of worldly cognizance; instead of being committed by inalienable right to Christ's spiritual body.

The previous statements then of Church authority must be modified by these contrary precedents, before we can rightly estimate how much the Reformation settlement assigned to the clergy, and how

¹⁰ De Officio Judicum, p. 190.

¹¹ "The ministers of God's word under his majesty be the bishops, parsons, vicars, and such other priests as be appointed by his highness to that ministration: as for example, the Bishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Duresme, the Bishop of Winchester, the Parson of Winwick," &c.—*Seventeen Questions, &c. Jenkyns's Cranmer*, vol. ii. p. 101.

much to the crown. And the contrary views, which are taken by different writers, of the position of the Church of England, have no doubt arisen from the fact that these conflicting principles were never adjusted by authority. It is impossible to say how much was intended to be assigned to the clergy, and how much to the crown, because the partition was neither fixed by law, nor explained in theory. It was neither decided by the acts of the Church, nor by the arguments of its writers. The case seems to have somewhat resembled that of the Papal supremacy, respecting which so much difference prevails between Gallican and Ultramontane authorities. The successor of St. Peter, say the latter, is the final earthly judge respecting spiritual matters, but he must be backed by the assent of the Church Universal. The Church Universal, say the Gallicans, is the final earthly judge, but its unity must be secured by the assent of its chief Bishop. In like manner it was left uncertain how much was due to the spiritual, and how much to the temporal authority: so much only was agreed that such statements as were adopted by the clergy of the realm, and were sanctioned by the crown, were binding both in law and conscience on all its subjects. It had been the received doctrine from the first origin of Christianity, that the divine truths of the Gospel required a divine gift for their adequate comprehension, and could not be safely expounded except by the teaching of that informing Spirit, by which they were at first communicated. Now this Spirit had been supposed to dwell in the mystical Body of Christ as in its tem-

ple; and the Fathers continually speak of it as having its abode in the collective episcopate, when united by concord and subordination into one organized whole; and as exercising, therefore, upon earth the authority of Him, whose promise insured His perpetual presence with the successors of the Apostles. So that while the Rule of Faith had been supposed to consist of those statements which the first generation of inspired men had been commissioned to deliver, the judge by which this rule was interpreted was not each man's private opinion, but that Divine power, which was pleased to give expression to its will through the collective voice of the Christian episcopate. For as the private conscience of individuals might lead to the most frightful crimes, unless held in check by that common feeling of right and wrong, which the Creator has implanted in our race; so a public guide was supposed to be the only security against such eccentricities as would destroy unity of faith, and render community of worship impossible.

Now it was an essential characteristic of the *Episcopal System*, that such a guide was supposed to be supplied by the decision of the national clergy, when backed by the sanction of the Sovereign. This is the conclusion which plainly follows from putting together the assertion in the Articles, that "the Church hath authority in controversies of faith," and the statement of the 139th Canon, that "the Sacred Synod of this nation, in the name of Christ, and by the King's authority assembled, is the true Church of England by representation." And every public act of the period proceeds upon this hypothesis.

Impossible as it is to discern how much was to be ascribed to the one, and how much to the other authority, nothing can be clearer than that the two, taken collectively, were supposed to possess a final power in the interpretation of doctrine. The same divine guidance, by which the Church had always been understood to be led into truth, was claimed for the acts of its authorized representatives, when sanctioned by the King. This did not interfere of course with the authority of Scripture, any more than the office of the judge interferes with the authority of the laws; for to determine what was the meaning of God's revealed will was the very point at issue. The existence of such guidance was implied both in the manner in which public decisions were given, and in the obedience which was claimed for them. They were given after solemn prayer "for the assistance of God's Holy Spirit."¹² And the Act of Parliament, which sanctions King Edward's First Book, which had been prepared by "the Archbishop of Canterbury and certain of the most learned and discreet Bishops," states it to have been concluded "by the aid of the Holy Ghost." But the things thus determined upon were not admitted to be valid, till they were confirmed by the sanction of the Sovereign. "It was the constant maxim of Queen Elizabeth, derived not so much from the statute of supremacy, as from the inseparable rights and prerogatives of the Crown, that she might establish and repeal canons." "In the case of the Articles she considered their authority to rest upon her ratification of them." Charles I.

¹² Wilkins, iv. 567.

says Dr. Cardwell, admitted [which he considers that Elizabeth did not do], "the necessity of calling in the aid of the clergy in their convocation."¹³ In either case, however, the power of the crown was supposed to rest upon the same divine principle, which gave authority to the decisions of the clergy. When Mason is pressed by the statement of the Emperor Theodosius, that Candidian, whom he had deputed to attend the Council of Ephesus, was not intended to interfere in deciding questions of faith, because he was not a Bishop, the reply given is, "Candidian and Theodosius stood on a different footing: the first was only a Count, and possessed merely a delegated authority: the second was the Emperor, to whom God Himself had committed the custody of both Tables of the Law. Again, it would have been wrong for one who was not a Bishop to interfere in an episcopal manner in making Canons, but a King might interfere in a royal manner."¹⁴

But the obligatory nature of the enactments which were thus adopted is most clearly shown by the obedience, which was required to them. For though it may be thought unwise to *compel* men to render a religious obedience even to God's commands, it seems inconceivable that religious obedience could ever be made compulsory, except to that which God was supposed to have commanded. Yet in the time of Hooker the whole system of the English Canon law, as imposed by the united authority of the Clergy and the Crown, was enforced upon every

¹³ Documentary Annals, vol. ii. p. 172.

¹⁴ Mason De Minist. Anglic. iii. 4, p. 298.

inhabitant of the realm. The 5th. Elizabeth 23, mentions "matter of heresy," "or error in matters of religion or doctrine now received and allowed," as well as the refusal "to come to divine service," or "to receive the holy Communion, as it is now commonly used to be received in the Church of England," as grounds for excommunication, and therefore for imprisonment "without bail." Nor was this supposed to be matter of coercion only, but of conscience; for while the law imposed its restraints upon the body, the Church asserted equal authority over the soul. Its general affirmation that the Church possessed "authority in controversies of faith," was carried out by the 9th and 12th Canons, wherein it was said, that to "separate from the communion of saints as approved in the Church of England," and "for any sort of ministers or lay-persons, or either of them, to join together and make rules in causes ecclesiastical without the King's authority, and submit themselves to be ruled by them," were "wicked errors;" and if any affirmed that they are not bound by the decrees made by the clergy in synod, and ratified by the King's authority, "as not having given their voices unto them," they are by the 140th Canon, "excommunicated and not restored, until they repent and publicly revoke that wicked error."

Here then we have distinct assertions, that such enactments as were sanctioned both by the Clergy and the Crown were binding in conscience as well as by law upon every subject of the realm. And a singular story, which is recorded by Strype, shows that

this system was felt to involve as complete a subordination of the individual to the public judgment as has ever been demanded in any part of the Church. It was in the year 1571 that "Mr. Strickland, an ancient gentleman of hot zeal, offered a bill" to Parliament with a view to a "further reformation of religion." A committee was subsequently ordered to wait upon "the Archbishop of Canterbury with the model for reformation; wherein as some articles of religion were allowed by them, so others, already received into the Church, were left out. The Archbishop taking a view of this draught, asked them why they put out of the book the Article for Homilies, and for the consecrating of Bishops, and some others. Mr. Peter Wentworth (who was of that Committee), a hot man, answered (as he gave an account of it himself in his speech in the next Parliament), because they were so occupied in other matters, that they had no time to examine them, how they agreed with the Word of God. Whereat the Archbishop replied, that surely they mistook the matter, saying further, you will refer yourselves wholly to us (the Bishops) therein. To which Wentworth in some heat, and somewhat rudely answered; 'No, by the faith I bear to God, we will pass nothing before we understand what it is. For that were but to make you Popes, make you Popes who list, for we will make you none.'"¹⁵

The reader may be ready to suppose that such a charge could never have been made, except when Lambeth was tenanted by Laud. But the Archbishop

¹⁵ Strype's Annals, ii. i. 7, p. 99.

who gave utterance to these sentiments was Parker, whose name is the very watchword of Protestant principles, and under whom the Church of England received its permanent shape. Nor was his assertion an idle boast. When "a bill for rites and ceremonies" was introduced the following year, (May 19, 1572), the Queen sent word to the house "that her pleasure was, that henceforth no bills concerning religion should be proposed or received into the house, unless the same should be first considered and liked by the clergy (*i. e.* in convocation)."¹⁶ To this command the House of Commons paid implicit obedience; and when Wentworth three years afterwards renewed the subject, stating, among other things, "that it was dangerous always to follow a prince's mind," that it was a "doleful message" to hear "that they should not deal in any matter of religion, but first to receive it from the Bishops," and "brought in the Bishops, upon whom he said, God's Spirit did not descend," his "speech was so illy taken of the house out of the reverent regard they had of her Majesty, that they stopped him before he had finished;" he was sequestered, examined in the Star Chamber touching his "virulent and wicked words," and finally committed to the Tower.¹⁷

Such was the Episcopal System as it existed in England after the Reformation. It was an alliance between the clergy and the Crown, by which each party gained protection against those opposite enemies, the Presbyterians and the Pope. The Church's

¹⁶ Strype's Annals, ii. i. 14. p. 185.

¹⁷ Id. p. 190.

Courts were protected by the Royal power, while, on the other hand, the Prince's authority was sustained by the co-operation of his native clergy. But the permanence of the system depended upon the continued agreement of the two contracting parties; so that any rupture between them must obviously be fatal. And so it proved when James II. broke up the harmony which had so long subsisted between the clergy and the Crown.

CHAPTER II.

THE TERRITORIAL SYSTEM, OR ERASTIANISM.

WE have seen the form which the Royal supremacy assumed in the age which followed the Reformation; and what were the principles of that Episcopal System, with which it entered into alliance. We have seen likewise that it had to encounter the objection, that it interfered with the freedom of individual opinion, and claimed an authority over the consciences of men, which involved the possession of a Divine commission. Such was obviously the right which was denied by Wentworth in the House of Commons, but which Archbishop Parker both claimed and exercised. But as time advanced, the objection was repeated on a greater scale, and with more formidable consequences.

Of all Parliaments, which ever assembled, none perhaps has consisted of persons, who were individually more attached to the Church of England, than that which met after the Restoration, May 8th, 1661. Baxter describes it as "constituted of men fitted and devoted to the Diocesan interest." No sooner had it assembled than the House of Commons proceeded to pass a Bill for Uniformity, which was

read a third time July 9th; while as yet the Convocation had been unable to take any steps towards a revision of the Liturgy, and was waiting the conclusion of the discussions at the Savoy. But when Parliament met again in November, and the Savoy Conference was concluded, the Convocation which assembled at the same time, received a Royal licence to make such changes in the Liturgy as seemed expedient. It proceeded in its work with the utmost despatch. The King's licence to the Archbishops, Bishops, and Clergy of the Northern Province, is only dated Nov. 22nd,¹ but a letter from Archbishop Frewen to his Registrar, written the very next day, speaks of it as of the utmost consequence, that a Delegation should be sent up instantly from York, in order that the Convocation of the two Provinces might act together. The Archbishop concludes; "adding only this here in the case, that if we have not all from you by the end of next week, we are lost." Now why this extraordinary despatch? It is plain that the Convocation feared lest the House of Commons, unless speedily supplied with the revised work, should renew the Bill which they had passed in the preceding Session, and perhaps proceed to make such alterations as they thought desirable, by their own authority. And this would have been an abandonment of principle, by which in the judgment of Archbishop Frewen, and of the Bishops of that period, all would have been "lost."

But was there any danger lest Parliament should thus take matters into their own hands? No little

¹ Kennett's Register, p. 564, and Wilkins, iv. 568.

impatience was expressed by both Houses to know when the Convocation would have finished their labours; but to propose alterations of the least importance on their own authority, would have been a departure from the principles laid down in the preceding reigns, and previously accepted by the Church of England. For though Parliament had repeatedly given legal sanction to that which had been agreed upon by the Sovereign and his divines, it had hitherto abstained from interfering with questions of doctrine. And the present House of Commons might be supposed to be peculiarly attentive to the principle on which this forbearance was grounded; for it assumed the existence of some divine commission, by which the interpretation of truth was entrusted to a certain body. Had no such commission existed, how could men be justified in exercising such rigour as was shown by the House of Commons, when in their Conference with the Lords they insisted that every one who taught youth, even in private houses, should be required to subscribe to the Act of Uniformity? Mr. Sarjeant Charleton was empowered to say in their name that "the Commons thought they ought to take care for the education of youth." "This made the Commons take care that the schoolmasters as well as ministers should subscribe, and rather more."² Unless they had admitted the ancient principle, that the interpretation of doctrine as given by authority had a claim upon the conscience, it seems inconceivable that they would have felt justified in interfering in this manner with persons, who did not

² Kennett's Register, p. 677.

aspire to any public employment. They could hardly have designed to renounce the claim which had formerly been made to a divine gift, at the very moment when they were increasing the stringency of those obligations, which would have been sheer tyranny if imposed by any mere human interpreter. And yet we see the growth of the same principle of opposition to an interpretive authority, which had been exhibited by Wentworth. "The question being propounded whether debate shall be admitted to the amendments made by the Convocation to the Book of Common Prayer, it passed in the negative. The question being put, that the amendments made by the Convocation might, by the order of the House, have been debated; it was resolved in the affirmative."⁸ Here, then, we see the ground of that anxiety, which had been shown by Archbishop Frewen, lest there should be any delay in obtaining the sanction of the northern Province. For if the House of Commons had proceeded to exercise the power, which even this favourable assembly was unwilling to renounce, the fundamental principle on which the authority of our formularies rested would have been overthrown, and the ancient relations between Church and State would have been destroyed. And no other body of representatives would have been likely to undo the evil, which might easily have been accomplished. Speaker Onslow, looking at the matter with the eye of a Hanoverian Statesman, calls "their not admitting any debate upon the amendments made by the Convocation,"

⁸ Kennett's Register, 661.

"a very extraordinary resolution;"⁴ and Bishop Gibson admits that "the *making* of laws concerning religion by the temporality in Parliament is a point not to be touched."⁵

If such was the state of feeling even in England, what was to be expected under the sway of those petty monarchs who made up the great German Confederacy, where the prevailing systems of opinion were neither recommended by any inherent excellence, nor by the authority of those who had originated or of those who administered them. England possessed two provincial Councils of Bishops, claiming descent from the Apostles, whose united decision could be invoked in matters of graver import. The doctrinal positions which had been built up by its great divines in the days of Laud, were the realities of the ancient faith, grounded upon that claim to a superhuman authority, by which the collective Church professed to have been guided in its understanding of the Divine will. But in Germany, where every paltry state had its independent consistory, what deference could be paid to divines, who had neither weight from personal influence, nor from the traditional authority of their system? These Consistories displayed a rigid and technical accuracy in defending the phrases and definitions of the Reformers—definitions and phrases which though introduced by men of great name, were yet only human, and therefore wore out in time and became unserviceable like other human inventions. For no enactments,

⁴ Notes to Burnet's Life and Times, vol. i. 317, Ox. 1823.

⁵ Gibson's Codex. Pref. p. xx.

which are merely human, can serve as lasting restraints for the consciences of men. And the Lutheran system of Justification (the main object of their solicitude) was in truth a mere mass of shadows, which so soon as any one attempted to grasp it, melted into nothing of itself,

"Par levibus ventis, volucrique simillima somno."

The weary mass of early Lutheran theology has been consigned to such total oblivion by the consent of all men, that it is hardly possible to realize the state of things, when the theological schools of a great literary nation were engaged in settling such questions as how far Major was justified in calling in question the well known proposition of Amsdorf, that "good works are a hindrance to salvation." And the whole system fell to pieces, so soon as there rose men of genius and earnestness, to emancipate conscience from the control of the Consistories, and to appeal from their effete technicalities to the reality of things.

This revolution was mainly brought about by Philip Jacob Spener (born A.D. 1635), the Wesley of Germany, who, more favoured or more prudent than our own countryman, was able to awaken the zeal of the National Church without dividing it. Pietism, of which he was the founder, was not the foundation of a sect, but an impulse given to the whole community. It is not to the present purpose to say anything of his opinions, except that in conformity with the spirit of ancient Christianity he introduced a reality into religion, which was incompatible, as well with the artificial formulas of what was called orthodox Lutheranism, as with the cold

and lifeless spirit of its adherents. But it was not without a violent struggle that the rule of the Consistories was broken, and their system of conventionalities superseded. And most curious and instructive it is to observe who it was who came to Spener's succour; what was the nature of the contest; and what have been the effects of the process, by which the ancient system of traditional authority was overthrown. It was not without its bearing upon our own present interests to observe, that the claim of the Lutheran Bodies to give an authorized interpretation of Doctrinal truth, was got rid of by *an alliance between Pietism and Liberalism*, and that *this alliance prepared the way for that system of Neological Infidelity*, which has since triumphed in Protestant Germany.

The associate by whose influence Spener was mainly supported, in the conflict which he continued for years to maintain against the supporters of an orthodox but arid Lutheranism, was Christian Thomasius, a jurist of high reputation, and very popular as an instructor of youth. Thomasius (born 1655), a disciple of the school of Puffendorf, was celebrated for his writings on natural law, which it had been his object to divest as much as possible of a religious character, and to rest upon a merely human basis. It was a kindred movement to assail those principles upon which the doctrinal authority of theological truth had hitherto depended. With this view he introduced what was called the Territorial System, in place of the Episcopal System. Its principle was that the consent of the clergy was not required for the settlement of questions

of doctrine, which must be decided exclusively by the temporal power. Through his means the Territorial System became the prevalent theory in Germany, and its alliance with Pietism was cemented by his appointment to the newly-founded Pietist University of Halle, A.D. 1694 (the very school in which neology had its origin). While Franke, the Pietist, taught Divinity, Thomasius introduced the custom of giving philosophical lectures in the German language, in which he gave his own theory of the principles of obligation. Its ready acceptance by the Pietist party is illustrated by the following passage from a work by one of their number. "In what better hands than that of the civil Governor could we, under existing circumstances, leave the management of our Evangelical Church? Should we better ourselves by a democratical form of government? That can hardly be thought of. Or should the helm of the Church be committed unreservedly to a Synod of the Clergy? Now, from this, good Lord deliver us."⁶

It might seem surprising that the pious Spener should have chosen to co-operate with a man who, like Thomasius, was notoriously opposed to his dearest principles, were there not instances enough that personal religion has not always taught men the importance of that public system, which is essential to the continuance of belief. Spener's biographer admits the sceptical tendency of the opinions of Thomasius, and that "his dislike of the orthodox Theologians, by whom he was continually opposed,

⁶ Stahl's *Kirchenverfassung der Protestanten*, p. 35.

and his apprehension of priestly supremacy in the Evangelical Church, more galling and oppressive than the single supremacy of the Pope, prompted him to substitute the Territorial for the Episcopal System."⁷ The tendency of things had been so evident from the first, that it was usual among the opponents of the new University, to say, in reference to Franke and Thomasius,⁸ "You are going to Halle; you'll come back either a Pietist or an Infidel." Probably Spener was blinded in a measure by the adoption of certain technical phrases, which those who borrow the language of a party can so readily assume. "Although," says Stahl, "the Territorial System, as set forth by Thomasius, was thoroughly Rationalistic in its fundamental principles, yet the occasion and motives which led to it, and the complexion given to it, was entirely Pietistic. Those who suppose that religion consists only in individual and private piety, and are indifferent about fixed dogmas and exterior organization, are disposed to limit the interference of Church authority with doctrines, and are ready to leave Church power in the hands of the civil governor, in the hope that his indifference will induce him to make little use of it. Such persons forget the need of a public organization of the Church, and of media by which its mind may be expressed. And, therefore, though Thomasius started from his own principles of natural law—which were at variance not only with Pietism, but with Christianity—yet his whole way of re-

⁷ Hossback's *Life of Spener*, vol. ii. p. 105.

⁸ Dieterici's *Preussischen Universitäten*, p. 52.

presenting the matter—the weight he laid on the invisible Church, or to speak more exactly on individual piety, his indifference about externals, about visible communion, and a fixed set of dogmas—all fell in entirely with the Pietist movement.”⁹

Such was the introduction of the Territorial System, or pure Erastianism in Germany. It had found individual advocates long before the time of Thomasius, and has received its more usual title from Thomas Lieber, or Erastus, as he called himself (Grecizing his name according to the custom of the period), a physician and professor, at Heidelberg [born, A. D. 1524]. Erastus had denied the Church's power of excommunication, and, in consequence, had been led to affirm, that the jurisdiction by which it is determined what her pastors shall teach, and her people must believe, is derived exclusively from the civil magistrate. His work, published after his death, gave the title of Erastianism to the system, which teaches that the civil magistrate has not only a peculiar commission, as being invested by divine appointment with a place in the Church's administration (which the Episcopal System was ready to allow), but that he possesses this power by inherent authority, whether he be a Christian or no; and further, that he is not bound to refer to the Church, as directed by supernatural guidance in the discovery of truth. Now, this is identical with the Territorial System. Thomasius, too, taught that the Church was only a function of the State, and its authority only a branch of the Civil Power; he

⁹ Stahl's Kirchenverfassung, p. 83.

derived the royal authority from *natural* right, and concluded that "it mattered not whether the Prince was a Christian or a Heathen."¹⁰ And, before the time of Thomasius, another writer had given the system of Erastus an European celebrity, and had greatly contributed to its predominance in Protestant Europe. This was Grotius, whose work, "*De imperio summarum potestatum circa Sacra*," was composed when the Arminian party was looking round for protection from the persecution of the Calvinistic divines. For, though not published till just after his death, A. D. 1646 (before which time his views on Church authority had undergone great alteration), it had been written thirty years earlier, and had probably been suppressed when he found that the Remonstrants had nothing to hope from the government of the United Provinces. In this work Grotius gives indication of the juster views, which afterwards grew upon him: he admits the judgment of the Catholic Church to be the highest authority, which can exist among men;¹¹ and he applauds the English Canon of 1571, which directs that nothing shall be taught by preachers, except that which has been sanctioned as scriptural by the ancient Church.¹² So far he might be supposed to concur entirely with the Episcopal System, which still predominated in his day, wherever the Royal Supremacy was established. But then he denies that which has

¹⁰ Stahl, 25.

¹¹ Nec illo iudicio (i. e. Ecclesiæ Catholicæ) inter humana ullum est majus auctoritate, Cap. v. 7.

¹² Non possum non laudare præclarum Angliæ Canonem, Anni 1571, &c.

been shown to be an essential part of it, that there exists any public judge who can claim submission from the individual conscience.¹³ To appeal to Scripture, as such a judge, he says, is only a figurative expression, for the very object of appealing, would be to determine its meaning.¹⁴ And, therefore, he leaves in reality an unrestricted liberty to every individual, and if to every one, why not to the Sovereign, who is as much entitled surely to exercise religious choice as any of his subjects? Why should the Sovereign be bound to follow the guidance of his theologians, since in so doing he relinquishes that inalienable right, which belongs to every responsible being?

Now this line of argument may be safely maintained, perhaps, when the principles of toleration are in the ascendant; and when governments cease to prescribe the religion of their subjects. And such may have been the result to which Grotius desired to lead men's thoughts. But when propounded early in the seventeenth century, while the sovereign power in every country of Europe enforced uniformity of faith upon its subjects, the statement could have no other meaning than that which was openly proclaimed by Hobbes. "Since God speaketh not in these days to any man by his private interpretation of the Scriptures, nor by the interpretation of any power above, or not depending on the sovereign power of every common-

¹³ "Alienum judicium directivum nemo sequi tenetur."—*De Imperio Summarum Potestatum*, &c., Cap. vi. 5.

¹⁴ *Scripturam Judicem* qui faciunt, recte sentiunt; sed figurate loquuntur. Nam exactam verborum rationem si sequimur, scriptura est *norma judicandi*; nunquam autem *Idem est sui regula*, v. 6.

wealth, it remaineth that He speaketh by His vice-gods, or lieutenants here on earth, that is to say by sovereign kings, or such as have sovereign authority as well as they."¹⁵ For what but this could follow from the principles which are laid down by Grotius? Prince and subject are correlative terms, so that if the one has a right to command, it is the duty of the other to obey. Now Grotius tells us that it must be left to God's providence¹⁶ to see, that the authority of sovereigns over religion is not abused; while at the same time he admits, that to exercise such authority over religion as he attributes to the prince, is to prescribe the doctrine which must be accepted by his people. That such must needs be the case he argues both from the admitted principles of law, and from experience. "There is nothing in which the ruler's power shows itself more clearly, than that it depends on his choice what religion shall be publicly exercised; and this is made the chief article in the magistrate's power over religion by all who have written on politics. We may see the same by experience. For if you ask why the Roman Catholic religion prevailed in England during the reign of Mary, the Reformed during that of Elizabeth, no direct reason can be given except the will of these queens, or as some persons would say of these queens and their parliaments."¹⁷

The example chosen by Grotius was in one respect not ill selected. For if there was any country where

¹⁵ De Corpore Politico, c. vii. 11.

¹⁶ Unicum hic solatium in divina est Providentia, c. viii., 2.

¹⁷ Cap. viii. 2.

Erastianism might show itself under plausible colours, and conceal the base and hateful features of its real character, it surely was England. Men of ordinary humility are of necessity influenced in matters of difficulty by the opinion of others. Let it be conceded then that there exists no divine rule for the interpretation of God's word, and what more natural than that a man should follow the system in which he has been educated, and which has on its side the public authorities of his native land. The civil magistrate is plainly God's ordinance; he makes his appeal to that system which God's natural providence has appointed among men. If he undertakes to prescribe the meaning of Scripture, while at the same time no divine rule is vouchsafed for its interpretation, why should not his bidding be obeyed? Is he not as likely to judge correctly as any other individual? Especially might this feeling be expected in a great, loyal, and united nation; in which the security of an insular situation had increased the natural aversion of the natives to foreign intrusion; while worldly success seemed to stamp God's favour on the justness of their principles. How natural the confidence of the Roman poet in those Gods who presided over the fortunes of the mistress of the world:

"Di Patrii, Indigines, quorum sub numine Roma est."

Similar causes accordingly have been found in practice to command the assent of the great majority of mankind. We find Turks at Constantinople: in China we meet with Buddhists. Why should not

Englishmen then be attached to a system, under which their nation has been distinguished in letters and renowned in arms? Now it has been shown that the Episcopal System, which prevailed in England after the Reformation, was very far from a system of Erastianism: but it must not surprise us if some circumstances led towards that view of things, which Grotius considered applicable even to our early history. These circumstances shall now be considered, and what are the influences which have tended to introduce that Territorial or Erastian System in England, which the combination of Pietism and Liberalism rendered prevalent in Germany.

Two especial causes have been at work, the first in the age of the Tudors and Stuarts, the second in that of their successors: the first, the ancient belief in the Divine right of Kings, the second, the modern disbelief in the Divine right of the Church. It was shown that the Episcopal System implied the union of two authorities, that of the Priesthood and that of the King: to exalt the kingly or to break down the priestly authority was alike fatal therefore to the ancient theory, because it destroyed the harmony of its parts—so that both tendencies led to an undue exaltation of the temporal power, or to the adoption of Erastianism.

When the supporters of the Episcopal System were called upon to state the exact measure of spiritual authority, which belonged respectively to the prince and to the clergy, they gave no definite reply. It seemed a sort of profaneness to limit that *Divine right of Kings*, which had an equally strong hold

in the creed of the Church, and the instincts of the people. This feeling remained unshaken so long as the absence of any rupture between the Church and the Crown made it unnecessary to inquire how much belonged to one authority, and how much to the other. But such events as those which produced and attended the Revolution, discovered to men the different foundations on which stood the civil and the spiritual authority. The first is plainly God's ordinance; His appointment for securing the peace of society, and the present welfare of man. Its particular form is prescribed by no general law; but obedience to its actual state is enjoined as well by the suggestions of conscience as by the voice of Revelation. Spiritual authority is administered according to different rules, and stands upon a different basis. Its object is not temporal welfare, but the advancement of holiness, and the ascendancy of truth: its superintending principle is not God's natural Providence, but His supernatural grace; its basis is neither individual opinion, nor the accidental posture of public affairs, but those rules and arrangements, which Our Lord prescribed to His ordained followers, when He sent them to be the representatives of His Presence, and administrators of His kingdom, saying, "all power is *given* unto Me in heaven and in earth."

Now, here are plainly two several classes of authority, which in objects, principles, and origin, are wholly distinct. The same parties may happen, no doubt, to be entrusted with the administration of both; but this is no reason why the powers them-

selves should be confounded. If a magistrate were to take orders and exercise the functions of a Bishop, a new commission would be added to that which he before possessed, but the spiritual authority itself would remain unimpaired; just as the principle of civil society suffers no detriment, because in the Roman States a Bishop is possessed of the supremacy of a king. The temporal society, proposing to itself the maintenance of peace and order, is not necessarily bound to consider what is beyond its own province. No doubt it may accidentally be raised to a higher level, through the feeling and conscience of the individuals who compose it. The purpose of a ship is to carry men over the waters; but there has been one ship, which, because of the character and office of those whom it carried, and of the miraculous preservation which it received, has become a standing type of the Church of God. But as it would be absurd to say that the ships of the heathen did not answer their object, because the Ark was made subservient to a higher end, so civil society effects its own object in securing peace and order; and if it aims at more than this, it is by reason of the private will of those who compose it. For men may make use of civil society, as well as of every other instrument, in the discharge of their private duty. And when the individuals who make up a community are agreed in their personal opinions respecting right and wrong, so that they can make use of the power which society confers for a good purpose, without sacrificing that peace and order which are its immediate objects, they are doubtless

justified in such an attempt. But in strictness the object of civil society is peace and order alone.¹⁸ And as its object, so its principle and its origin are peculiar to itself. It is under the direction of that general Providence of Almighty God, which extends its regards to all whom He has created : and it has its origin in natural conscience as well as in His revealed will. This last sanction does not alter its nature ; it merely augments our certainty of its obligations. It does not give it a right to reach beyond its province, or to interfere with subjects out of its control. The settlement of truth for instance is dependent on the influence of that guiding Spirit which is the directing principle of the Church, and which leads us backward by continuous steps to the Pentecostal gift, as the origin of Christ's spiritual kingdom. Now the sanction given in Scripture to the temporal ruler no more interferes with this spiritual power, than that which is given to every parent interferes with the royal authority. As the king is head of the whole nation, yet every father possesses his parental rights, so does Church authority exist in its appropriate sphere, though every Christian acknowledges the rights of civil society.

These two co-ordinate principles—the temporal Society founded on natural law, and the spiritual founded on divine commission—existed together on the same soil, and with many of the same persons as their subject-matter, for the first three centuries

¹⁸ "Ut enim gubernatori cursus secundus, medico salus, Imperatori victoria, sic moderatori reipublicæ beata civium vita proposita est ; ut opibus firma, copiis locuples, gloriâ ampla, virtute honesta sit."
—*Cicero de Republica*, v. 6.

after Christ. When the Gospel became the faith of the empire, the persons who composed the one, became identical throughout Christendom with the persons who composed the other. Yet it was not supposed at that period that the claim of each ceased to be distinct. St. Augustin lays it down as a rule, that it was the same Divine power which bestowed empire upon Heathen and upon Christian Princes. "Qui Augusto, ipse et Neroni—qui Constantino Christiano ipse Apostatæ Juliano."¹⁹ It would follow, of course, that every Christian owed a double obedience—one to the temporal magistrate, as the possessor of that power which was exercised in accordance with God's natural Providence; the other to the rulers of that spiritual society, of which his baptism had made him a part. Neither did the one of these relations relax or undo the obligation of the other. But when the Roman empire yielded to the assault of the Barbarian tribes, and that homogeneous form of society fell to pieces, which had previously covered the whole civilized earth, the men of different nations, who were scattered together throughout Europe, naturally preferred each his hereditary laws. Those who used the Latin tongue appealed to Roman, as those who spoke Teutonic to German usage. And from this cause it came to pass, as well as from reverence to the Church, which alone had survived the shock of the political earthquake, that as the clergy universally retained the Latin language, so were they allowed to be amenable only to that system of spiritual law, of which the

¹⁹ De Civitate Dei, v. 21.

Roman patriarch was considered the centre. Thus was their allegiance to the Divine kingdom of the Church supposed to exempt them from those relations, which were dependent on God's natural Providence. And when this state of things had been put a stop to at the Reformation, the increasing power of national organization was not content merely to vindicate its right, but sought to compensate the civil power for its previous losses, by a corresponding infringement of the rights of the Spiritual Society. Thus arose the notion that the Royal Supremacy conferred some peculiar right of judging in things sacred by reason of the *Divine right of Kings*.

That some portion of the power which is inherent in Christ's spiritual kingdom belongs of right to Christian kings, was an essential part of that which acquired the name, as we have seen, of the Episcopal System. The royal co-operation was supposed to confer that completeness on the national Church, the possession of which made its sentence equivalent to the sentence of the Church universal in its power of binding the consciences of the king's subjects.²⁰

²⁰ In defending this position against Roman Catholic writers, our divines affirmed that the Church of England, ever since the Reformation, had been in a state of appeal to the Church Universal, and submitted to its judgment wherever it had been, or could be, pronounced. They alleged also, that the Pope was not satisfied with the authority of a Patriarch, that England did not belong to any Patriarchate, and that they had been required to accept doctrines and practices, which could not be admitted. On these subjects, however, nothing will be said here; the present question being merely what portion of Church authority appertained to the clergy, and what portion to the crown.

This would seem to imply that a Christian king was not, strictly speaking, a layman ; but that his divine commission to rule, transferred him in some way from the kingdom of nature to the kingdom of grace. It was asserted, says Stillingfleet, in Henry VII's. time, that the king is "*persona mixta*," and he cites an old adage, which gives us sa a reason, that he is "*persona unita cum sacerdotibus sanctæ Ecclesiæ*."²¹ If there be any real meaning in this assertion, it must be designed to attribute to kings some peculiar *personal* sacredness ; and such a notion is countenanced in a gloss quoted by Lynwood : "*Rex unctus non mere Persona Laica, sed mixta secundum quosdam*."²² For no such right could accrue to any one from such mere possession of secular power, as might be shared by an elected President, or by the Delegates of the people. Al that such parties could possess, would be merely the right, which is inherent in the temporal power, to see that all classes of men within the range of its authority do their duty. So much as this might be freely allowed to the ruling power by those who were most jealous of interference with their religion ; for it would merely subject the Spiritual Society to that general superintendence, to which every individual and every corporation is accustomed to submit. The Geological Society, for example, is amenable to the laws of the land for any contracts into which it enters, and the Courts would correct any injustice of which its officers were guilty, as respects the

²¹ The Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, cap. ii.

²² Provinciale, lib. iii. tit. 2, Gloss on Beneficiati.

property or liberty of its members. The Ruling Power, that is, has authority *in all causes, and over all persons*. But this superintendence does not extend to the questions of science which are discussed at its meetings; it is not thought necessary to refer to the Queen, as the earthly head of this kingdom, to adjudicate between the systems of Hutton and of Werner, and to decide whether any existing genera of animals are of older date than the deposition of the chalk. A few years back, a foreigner, Cuvier, would probably have been admitted to be the final authority in matters of geology, whose opinion it would have been thought no want of loyalty to prefer in such matters to that of our native Prince. And in the present day, when we have sufficient authorities within the realm, those who wished for information would refer to Sedgwick or Owen, rather than to her Majesty.

In like manner is it clear that as respects religious questions, the temporal power could not, in itself, claim spiritual authority. So that the spiritual function which was attributed by the Episcopal System to the king, was to be sought for in that peculiar sacredness, which attached to his person, *by Divine right*. And therefore Mason denies (as we have seen) that Candidian, the emperor's delegate, possessed that authority which he asserts for Theodosius himself. Now, whether the king possessed this right by hereditary descent, or as the Lord's anointed, does not seem to have been fully determined; so much only is certain, that if it existed at all, it must have been a *personal* attribute of the sovereign.

And this is clear from the answer given to the obvious objection, that to attribute authority in things sacred to heathen monarchs would have been to condemn the holy martyrs. This objection might have been met by allowing, with St. Augustin, that heathen monarchs have the same authority as Christian in civil causes, and over the persons of men, but that neither of them possess spiritual authority. Or it might have been said that the authority of kings in matters of religion is committed to them by the Church. But what is Mason's reply? Heathen kings, he says, have authority in religious questions *objectivè*, but only Christian kings *effectivè*. And he cites another authority, which says: "non potestatis defectus in ethnico, sed voluntatis."²³ His meaning would seem to be that the power of a heathen monarch lies dormant within him, till it is brought out by his joining the Church. So that in himself lie the rudimentary principles of this claim: it is no power conferred upon him by law or revelation, but the development of an internal capacity, which has its origin in a divine right. And this brings us nearly to the assertion of Hobbes: "Though kings take not upon them the ministerial priesthood, yet are they not so merely laick, as not to have sacerdotal jurisdiction."²⁴

That such was the meaning of that authority in matters of religion, which was claimed for kings as of divine right, is obvious from the arguments which were used in its defence. It has been stated that

²³ De ministerio Anglicano, lib. iii. c. 5, p. 311, A. D. 1638.

²⁴ De Corpore Politico, vii. 11.

the ecclesiastical power, which the Church has no right to surrender, may be classed under four heads: Orders, Spiritual Mission, the exercise of Church Discipline, and the right of determining Doctrine. Now the arguments, which were usually brought forward by those who advocated the divine right of kings, would have justified them in claiming every one of these except Holy Orders. These arguments were drawn commonly from three sources, either from the authority of kings under the old covenant; from the authority of Christian emperors; or from early precedents in our own history. From Jewish history it was urged that Solomon deposed Abiathar,²⁵ that Jehoshaphat set up spiritual Judges, and that Hezekiah put down idolatry.²⁶ Hence it was inferred that kings have an absolute right to appoint such teachers as they please for the religious instruction of their people, and to require them to adopt that form of worship which pleases themselves.

Our present purpose is to show the conclusion in which this mode of reasoning results: that if it proves anything, it implies that kings possess the power of spiritual mission, and the right of deciding respecting doctrines. But it may be well to point out the inconclusiveness of the precedents commonly employed. For, first, the Jewish kings made no attempt to interpret the law by their royal authority. When Hezekiah put down idolatry, he suppressed that which was admitted on all hands to be as contrary to the Jewish law as murder or theft. When

²⁵ Mason, iii. 2, 263.

²⁶ Id. iii. 4, 279, 280.

Jehoshaphat appointed instructors for the people, he subordinated them to those who had authority from the Jewish Church.³⁷ Secondly—The dispensation of the Law is not analogous to the dispensation of the Gospel. For the gift of God's grace has been promised to the Church, but no corresponding gift of guidance was promised to the nation of Israel. So that while the Jewish kings had no better title to interpret Scripture than any one of their subjects, they were yet in no danger of coming into collision with that spiritual kingdom, which had not then been established. Thirdly—It must be remembered that such guidance as God was pleased to bestow upon His people for the explanation and enlargement of their law was bestowed through the instrumentality of Prophets. This provision was made for men under the ancient covenant; as the modern election is guided by that perpetual presence of the Comforter, which has been promised to the Church. Now, among these Prophets, David and Solomon held a conspicuous place. Those who suppose that all monarchs possess the same authority with which these kings were entrusted, might as well say that they are entitled to add to the Psalms of the one, or the Proverbs of the other.

The appeal which was made to the practice of the Christian emperors, led in like manner to consequences which would have been fatal to the Church's existence; had it not been based, like the

³⁷ "Behold, Amariah the High Priest is over you in all matters of the Lord, and Zebadiah, the son of Ishmael, for all the king's matters."—II. *Chron.* xix. 11.

preceding one, upon principles which were wholly untenable. Cases were easily adduced, in which the emperors had interfered in religious matters. Constantine's judgment of the Donatists was one of the most usual. The decrees of Justinian, and the conduct of Theodosius, were in like manner referred to. Theodosius is alleged to have had written statements laid before him, in which the Arian and Catholic views of Christianity are severally detailed; he then, it is said, retired to consider them, seeking guidance from private prayer, and came to the determination that the Catholic faith should be accepted as the Creed of the empire.²⁸ Now these instances, as they have often been adduced, would go the length of showing that men are bound, under all circumstances, to adopt the religion of their prince; and thus would prove more than was designed by those who urged them. This is not the place to examine them, but it might be shown that they are commonly open to the following objections: First—The cases usually adduced do not establish the point which it is attempted to prove. That Constantine, for instance, heard the complaint of the Donatists, proves nothing. For he had first referred them to a body of episcopal judges. Now, at that time the unity of the episcopal body secured community of doctrine throughout the world. There was no danger, therefore, lest any *doctrine* should be interfered with; and this is the real point which the Church is concerned to vindicate. Besides, the question of the Donatists was not a matter of doc-

²⁸ Mason, iii. 4, p. 297.

trine, but rather resembled a private quarrel. Yet as it was a Church-quarrel, Constantine stated that he was conscious he had no proper jurisdiction in the case. By importunity, however, they obtained a re-hearing of it before himself. We have no evidence that, if his judgment had been favourable to them, he would have attempted to set aside the decision of the Bishops, or that the Church would have acquiesced in such an act. All which is known is, that he told them that he was no fit judge of such matters, but that according to their own showing, he thought that they had no ground of complaint. And here the matter rested. No doubt, however, there were many cases in which both the judicial and the legislative power of the emperors was admitted. But none can be produced, in which the Church acquiesced, which shows any direct interference with that which is properly spiritual. When the Canons of the Church were allowed to have accidentally the force of temporal laws, they were subject, so far as this temporal accident went, to the worldly authority, which contributed to give them influence. But this did not touch that which was spiritual. In considering "how the Canons of councils stood in need also of the Prince's authority, we must distinguish," says Casaubon, "the royal authority, by which they have the force of laws in the state, from the Episcopal and Divine, by which they are of force in the Church, and upon the consciences of good men."²⁹

²⁹ De Libertate Ecclesiasticâ, iii. 2. Vide Hicckes's Treatises, vol. iii. p. 181, Ang. Cath. Library.

Secondly—When the emperors interfered with the Church's real liberty, it was in the face of strenuous protests on the part of various Bishops, and was an act of persecution to which, as a body, the Church never submitted. An example is supplied by the addresses of St. Athanasius, of Hosius, and of Lucifer of Cagliari, to Constantius. St. Athanasius remonstrated, not only against the false doctrines which Constantius patronized, but also against the usurped authority by which he enforced them. He entreated him "not to blend the Roman empire with the decrees of the Church." "For when were such things heard of from the beginning of the world? When did the judgment of the Church receive its authority from the emperor?"⁸⁰ St. Athanasius himself, and various other Bishops, were repeatedly banished for refusing to submit to such aggressions of the civil power. And of all causes which led to the degeneracy of the Eastern Church, none was more material than that forgetfulness of the true source of spiritual authority, which allowed "Jerusalem which is above" to lose its freedom, and settle down into "the King's Chapel and the King's Court."

Thirdly—In referring to the conduct of the Christian emperors, we must remember that each several portion of the Church does not stand in the same position with the Church Universal. It cannot safely concede so much; yet it is in danger of being expected to concede more. It cannot concede so much,

⁸⁰ Hist. Arian. ad Monachos, secs. 34 & 52.

because its plea is that it stands upon those ancient precedents, which have been laid down by the authority of the whole body; while the undivided Church could act with that confidence which belongs to a moral agent. A man who is entrusted with that which is another's, cannot act with the same freedom as one who judges of that which is his own. But while it ought to concede less, it is expected commonly to concede more. For every thing which weakens the spiritual authority augments the preponderance of the worldly power. That the Universal Church was felt in ancient times to possess a real authority in the settlement of questions, may be seen from the statements even of that arbitrary prince, Justinian. He admitted in the fullest manner that the determination of all matters of doctrine lay with the Church. He opens his *Codex*³¹ with the decree of Gratian, which recognized the existing patriarchal authority, as interpretive of the system taught by the Apostles; and he begins his regulations on ecclesiastical subjects, by stating that he accepts "the dogmas of the Four General Councils as he does the sacred scriptures, and observes their rules as laws."³² So long, then, as the recollection of previous independence, and the unity of her existing judgment secured such practical authority to the Church's authority, there was no danger lest her concessions should endanger the principle of her existence, or lead any one to forget the origin of her power.

³¹ *Codex*, lib. i. tit. i. l.

³² *Authen*, Collatt, ix. 14, *Novell*. 181, c. 1.

But besides the examples drawn from Jewish kings and Christian emperors, precedents were derived from our own early history. These were especially collected by Lord Coke in his fifth Report (on *Cawdrey's Case*). The use to be made of them was the following: The 25th of Henry VIII., c. 19, had given the king's delegates the power of hearing causes on appeal; but it left the ordinary course of ecclesiastical jurisdiction to the Courts of the Bishops. It was only after matters had been decided in the Ecclesiastical Courts, and for lack of justice in them, that appeal could be made to the king's delegates. But the High Commission Court, instituted by virtue of the 1st Elizabeth, 1, did not confine itself within any such limits, but took cognizance of all ecclesiastical cases in the first instance, and thus occupied the whole field of spiritual jurisdiction. The only justification for the Crown's interference, either in cases of appeal, or in the High Commission Court, was that the Crown had pledged itself, both by the Preamble of 24th Henry VIII., 12, and by the 20th article, to leave spiritual matters to the settlement of the Church, and that reliance might be placed upon the royal promise; and Queen Elizabeth did in fact employ Bishops in the Court of High Commission. But when the right of the High Commission Court to deprive was called in question, as exceeding the power committed to it by 1st Elizabeth, 1, Lord Coke endeavoured to show that its authority was not derived from this statute, but from the ancient prerogative, which had always been exercised by the English crown. Such was the purpose of his famous

5th Report, which undertook to prove that "our ancient law doth give the king a power, by virtue of his Ecclesiastical jurisdiction, to appoint commissioners by an extraordinary way of jurisdiction to proceed *in primâ instantiâ*, against persons by Ecclesiastical censures."³³ Now, this would be to transfer the whole question of Communion, and indirectly, therefore, the giving of spiritual mission and the settlement of doctrine, to the Crown. But such an exercise of the royal authority has been shown by Bishop Stillingfleet to be unconstitutional. The 1st Elizabeth, i. 18, under which the High Commission Court had been established, having been taken away by the Long Parliament, 17 Car. I. 11, the ancient supremacy of the Crown was re-affirmed after the Restoration, by 13 Car. II. 12. A new Court of Commission therefore was established by James II. upon the authority of the ancient supremacy, as interpreted by Lord Coke. This led Stillingfleet, who was summoned to appear before it, to examine the case; and he has shown that "there is not one instance among the many alleged by my Lord Coke, that is sufficient, or that comes up to the point."³⁴

Such were the three sets of argument by which the Divine right of kings to give rule to the Church was defended in the age of the Stuarts. And inconclusive as were all three, they had great weight in a loyal age, when men's prepossessions were enlisted in their favour. They were adduced, too, in support of that Episcopal System which had been

³³ Stillingfleet of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, &c. c. 2.

³⁴ Gibson's Codex, i. p. 44.

recognized by common consent at the Reformation, and which promised to maintain the religious unity of the nation. And yet, though employed to support the Episcopal System, their real tendency was to something very different. They could have no real weight except as arguments for the Territorial System, or Erastianism. For the discriminating difference between this last, and the Episcopal System, is that the Episcopal System maintains a balance between the clergy and the crown—the Territorial System subjects the one to the other. Now, in the cases upon which these arguments are built, the crown is not asserted to have co-operated with the clergy, but to have exercised arbitrary authority. However readily, therefore, they were accepted by the loyalty of those who advocated the Divine right of kings, they made nothing in reality for the Episcopal System; and there is a fundamental inconsistency by which all of them are vitiated. For the Divine right of kings was supposed to be some inherent virtue, which did not come into life and energy till they became Christians. Its advocates were not so far gone in the principles of slavery, as to suppose that they were bound to renounce Christianity at the will of a heathen prince. So that the nation was bound to accept whatever teaching was authorized by the prince, because Ecclesiastical supremacy was inherent in him by Divine right; and yet he was supposed to lose this power whenever he believed what was erroneous. The clergy again were bound to believe whatsoever the prince should prescribe; but only so long as the prince prescribed

that which they were bound to believe. Such a system must of necessity result in confusion, unless, as Grotius suggested, its natural effects were providentially intercepted. And this, therefore, is Mason's answer, when he is reminded that the sovereign might cease to be a Christian. "I answer," he says, "that this title (Head of the Church) has been given by Christians to a Christian king, in a country which for centuries has been Christian. And therefore they might hope (why should they not hope it, for charity hopeth all things), that this kingdom will always continue in the faith of Christ."³⁵

The contingency, however, arose which Mason thought it uncharitable to forecast. There was a division between the clergy and the crown. And neither the clergy nor the nation showed themselves disposed to abandon their opinions at the dictation of James II. Those who have yielded obedience to the monarchs who have since occupied the throne, cannot rest the Sovereign's Ecclesiastical supremacy upon a divine right inherent in kings, either by hereditary descent or as anointed sovereigns. Not on the first, because the descendants of the Electress Sophia can claim no other right than that which was conferred by Parliament upon their ancestress: not upon the second, because the supremacy of an English king is as undeniable before his coronation as after it. So that whatever authority he possesses must be dependent solely upon the Territorial System;

³⁵ "Sperare igitur poterant (et quidni sperarent? nam charitas omnia sperat) hoc Regnum in fide Christi semper permansurum."—*Mason de ministerio Anglicano*, iii. 5.

upon his claim as the representative of the worldly power. And this power is wholly irrespective of that peculiar virtue which was supposed to be inherent in monarchs, and to come out so soon as they became Christians. For the present line of English Sovereigns, though restricted from becoming Roman Catholics, are not bound to any positive belief. A Socinian or Swedenborgian would be as good a Protestant in the eye of the law as a Churchman. If there were any peculiar authority therefore over religion which was possessed by Christian, and not by heathen emperors, it is manifestly inapplicable to our present circumstances, because we are subject to a *legal* supremacy, which would not be impaired if the sovereign ceased to be a member of the Church. And though the arguments which have been noticed still exercise influence over many minds, yet they cannot now be adduced except as advocating such pure Erastianism, as would have made it the duty of the Apostles to obey men rather than God. Their real tendency was always towards this system, but so long as they were built upon the divine right of kings, they were capable of a less sordid application. The Scotch Episcopalians might no doubt have continued to use them during the last century, while they referred to the Court of St. Germain's in the appointment of their Bishops. Their employment, under present circumstances, by members of the English Church, would imply either want of perception or want of honesty.

It has been shown that the Episcopal System rested upon the co-operation of the Clergy and the Crown ;

and that the equilibrium of the two forces was disturbed by that preponderance which was given to the crown, by the zealous advocates of the divine right of kings. This tendency, which predominated under the Stuart kings, coincided in its effects with that denial of the divine right of the Church, which was equally predominant under the Hanoverian princes. So that if Erastianism was fostered during the one age by men's affection to the Crown, it was still more fostered during the other by their hatred to the Church. It seems strange that the same system should be indebted to Laud and Hoadly—to the High Commission Court, and the flatterers of George II. This prince was probably correct in his judgment of the follower whom he had elevated; and was right in supposing that it was no part of Hoadly's design to augment the prerogative of the crown.³⁶ Yet such was the actual result of his principles. The withdrawal of one part of that complex

³⁶ "My Lord," said the King to Lord Harvey, "I am very sorry you choose your friends so ill; but I cannot help saying, if the Bishop of Winchester is your friend, you have a great puppy and a very dull fellow and a great rascal for your friend. It is a very pretty thing for such scoundrels, when they are raised by favour so much above their desert, to be talking and writing their stuff, to give trouble to the Government, which has showed them that favour: and very modest in a canting hypocritical knave to be crying, 'the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world,' at the same time that he, as Christ's ambassador, receives £6000. or £7000. a year. But he is just the same thing in the Church that he is in the Government, and as ready to receive the best pay for preaching the Bible, though he does not believe a word of it, as he is to take favours from the crown, though by his republican spirit and doctrine he would be glad to abolish its power."—*Lord Harvey's Memoirs*, Chap. xxi. vol. ii. p. 47.

system on which Church authority had previously depended, had a natural tendency to make the other predominate. And besides its direct effect in increasing the prerogatives of the crown, the system of Hoadly tended indirectly to diminish the alarm which any interference with the rights of conscience must naturally engender. For there are two main views respecting the nature of the Church—one, that which prevailed in ancient times; the other that which was first heard of soon after the era of the Reformation, and which became predominant in this country during the last century. The first of these represents the visible Church as leading to the invisible—the second the invisible as leading to the visible. The first is the sacramental form of religion, which attributes reality to the ordinances of grace. The second makes the Church only a name, and divests all its functions of reality. Now, supposing the last of these, which is the system of Hoadly, to be adopted, Erastianism is no such frightful evil, but is rather to be looked at as a satisfactory haven amidst the collisions of opinion.

To make this more evident, let us go somewhat deeper into the systems before us. It is admitted on all hands that religion is designed to be the means of reconciling man to God. But by what means is the reconciliation to be effected? Is the first act on the part of man; or on the part of God? The ancient notion was that the creature could not tend towards perfection save through the act of the Creator, and that He, therefore, who made man, must supply the principle of his renewal. We must look outside of us

for "the way, the truth, and the life." The first act, therefore, was supposed to be taken by God, in the Person of the Word, when clothing Himself in our flesh, He came down among men. From that beginning was the Divine work extended among mankind through the sacraments of grace. Thus did the movement, which had its origin in God, diffuse itself among mortals. The other system supposes the first movement to be on the part of man, whose faith or feelings lay hold on the satisfaction, which is ready to our hands through the death of Christ, Our Lord, and apply it to the salvation of individuals. It may be supposed, indeed, that a divine inspiration leads men to make their first movement towards God, but it is an inspiration which proceeds directly from God to those who are the subjects of it, and is irrespective therefore of that God-man, who is the one Mediator³⁷ between God and His brethren. For those first movements of grace which depend upon His influence must be relative to the media, through which the fulness of His presence is dispensed; as the twilight to that orb of day, of which it is the precursor. So far, therefore, as regards the actual union between God and His creatures, and those known events, which accompany the economy of grace, the commencement is with man, who applies to himself certain appointed instruments of salvation. Now it is clear that the Church will be regarded in a different light, according as the one or the other of these systems is adopted. If the first movement

³⁷ On this subject I would refer to the eleventh Chapter of a work on "The Doctrine of the Incarnation."

come from the Divine Head of our race, it must obviously be propagated through those ordinances, whereby we are made members of His body; the visible Church must go before the invisible; we must be chosen into Him, and grafted into the Christian Vine, before we can truly respond to the blessings to which we are admitted. But it is different if the first steps towards renewal are supposed to be taken by man. In this case it will be conceived that a religious spirit grows up among a number of individuals, that they look around them for the means of maintaining it, that combination, concert, communication, are observed to have a natural efficacy, and thus that they form themselves into a religious club, which is called the Church.

Now, if this last system be adopted, what great harm can there be in Erastianism? What is the Church in this case but a set of external rules, by which men are held together? It matters little whence these rules are derived, provided they are found in practice to answer their purpose. Neither does it follow because one set of rules are the best which could be devised, that another may not be adequate. That which suits in one country might be inapplicable in another. So that, looking to the contention and misery which is always engendered by religious disputes, it would seem wiser to keep to that system under which men happen to be placed, without troubling themselves with its origin or authority. Even if its introduction should have been harsh and arbitrary, and a violation of the principles of reason and conscience, yet when these hardships

have been surmounted, and the will and habits of individuals have learnt to run in unison with public law, to acquiesce in the system which they find, must be better than to incur the risk of altering it. Such must be the conclusion of thoughtful men, if Church-government be merely a set of arbitrary rules, invented by human sagacity. But if there be indeed a Divine system in the world, through which God the Son imparts Himself to mankind; if the participant of the Holy Eucharist truly and not only in imagination receives his Maker; if God the Holy Ghost really has His dwelling in the Church of the redeemed—then of course it must be of great moment to preserve entire and inviolate the principles of that Institution, through which things so momentous are communicated. If this be believed, no fear of consequences must prevent us from maintaining conditions which are essential to the validity of our highest blessings.

This contrast might be pushed further still, and be shown to have relation to every part of the economy of man's salvation. Is the work, which is to be effected in each individual, real or imaginary; are men only to be *accounted*, or are they also to be *made* holy in Christ; are Our Lord's merits only a consideration, on the strength of which men may put in a technical claim to forgiveness, or are they the introduction of a principle of renewal, whereby *those* are accepted, who are truly united to the Second Adam? It is plain how intimately this allies itself with the previous subject, and how closely the question of justification depends upon those cardinal

principles, on which the Catholic, contrasts with the Puritan Theology. The Christian system, as it was understood by the Fathers of the Church, is a *reality*, which had its commencement in the miraculous conception of the Son of Man. Its further course was through the divine ordinances of His Church. It was destined to survive, so long as the period of man's probation continued, as a real system of supernatural acts. Those things, which were to be done for ever at its altars, were real transactions; whereby the condition of mankind was to be truly affected. Its conduct was under the unfailing guidance of that Indwelling Spirit, whose gracious will was to take up His abode in the collective body of the Church, and thereby to vivify and maintain the new Creation. Thus was a supernatural power brought in to perpetuate a supernatural system. Christianity was a truth, and the new Creation had its laws and principles as really as the old.

Now this whole system of truths was got rid of by that theology of Hoadly, which predominated during the last century. Its tendency, as the lower House of Convocation states in the celebrated "Representation," which led to the suspension of its synodical action, was "to subvert all government and discipline in the Church of Christ, and to reduce His kingdom to a state of anarchy and confusion." In his view, they add, "all Church communion is rendered unnecessary in order to entitle men to the favour of God."³⁸ Thus was the Church rendered a shadow, and naturally enough men became indifferent

³⁸ Wilkins, iv. 672.

respecting its independence. For when a house has been pillaged, of what use is it to bar the doors? This remark is applicable to various systems of Church polity, which have been put forth since the days of Hoadly. Take the "Alliance of Church and State," as interpreted by Warburton. His notions of the functions of the Church are far higher than those of Hoadly. He maintains as his "cardinal principles," "that the State hath only the care of bodies, and the Church only the care of souls; and that each society is sovereign and independent of the other."³⁹ He affirms it to be essential that the Church should retain the power of excommunication, without which "the Society dissolves, and falls back into nothing."⁴⁰ He contends that no change ought to be made in those laws, by which the Church is governed, without her consent.⁴¹ Finally, he thinks the existence of an Established Church so important, that its security is a sufficient reason for excluding all dissenters by a Test Law from political power.⁴² Yet when we inquire what purpose the Church is intended to effect, we find to our surprise, that for that greatest and most important object, the maintenance of truth, it is itself indebted to the temporal power. "Of whatever use an alliance may be thought for preserving the *Being* of religion; the necessity of it for preserving its *Purity* is most evident." And again he speaks of "the danger religion runs of deviating from truth, when left in its natural

³⁹ Alliance, iii. 3, p. 235.

⁴⁰ Ibid. i. 5, p. 73.

⁴¹ Ibid. ii. 3, p. 156.

⁴² Ibid. iii. 1, p. 195.

state to itself.”⁴³ And the only remedy which he can find for this evil is, that since true religion will no doubt be most conducive to temporal welfare, the statesman, through his experience in respect to the last, will be able to guide the divine in his search after the former.⁴⁴ Thus is the salt of the earth to acquire savour by being trodden under foot of men. And since the early Church lost its inspired founders, just at the moment when the Roman empire passed into the hands of those virtuous rulers—Adrian and the Antonines—whose desire was undoubtedly to secure the happiness of their subjects; its best security against the growth of heresy, would have been to place itself under the guidance of the Emperors.

Though the theory of Warburton, therefore, be entirely opposed to Erastianism in its principles, it has yet no other tendency in its results. For why should such pains be taken to maintain the Church’s independence, unless this independence involves some adequate result? Why limit civil freedom, unless there is a compensation in the security of religious truth? To what purpose found the Church as a separate society, if it requires to be tutored by its partner the State? If she be not a divine system,

⁴³ Alliance, ii. 2. 92, 93.

⁴⁴ “When religion is in alliance with the State, as it then comes under the magistrate’s direction, those holy leaders having now neither credit nor power to do mischief, its purity must needs be well supported and preserved. For truth and public utility coinciding, the civil magistrate, as such, will see it for his interest to seek after and promote truth in religion: and by means of public utility, which his office enables him so well to understand, he will never be at a loss to know where such truth is to be found.”—*Warburton’s Alliance*, ii. 2.

guided by that indwelling spirit, which is pledged as the perpetual mean of the presence of her Lord, she has no right to hold herself aloof from the worldly power, as though she were of a different class and higher origin. For the state is God's natural ordinance, and what else is the Church, unless she be supernatural and divine? And the same remarks are applicable to the theory more recently propounded by an able writer in the "Letters by an Episcopalian." Here we meet with a vindication of the Church's independence, which might seem to be built on the principles of Law or of Leslie. But what purpose is this independent society designed to effect? Is it to be the channel of grace? Of this we have no indication. Is it to be the conservator of doctrine? This does not appear. Now it may be wise for the State to support a gorgeous hierarchy, even though it leaves it no distinctive character, and debars it from those functions which its Divine author designed it to perform. Such an institution may be useful in drawing off that private enthusiasm, which else, like the flood-tide in a river, might rise too high for the banks. But why should individuals trouble themselves respecting the independence of a body which has nothing to effect? Those who contend for the Church's right of self-government, must needs look upon it as a society, which might at any moment be thrown upon its own resources, and left to struggle for itself. They must think that a time might arrive, when it would be necessary that it should choose between endowments and truth. Yet accept the theology of Hoadly, and what would be

the meaning and use of a Free Church? What guide would it be to the understanding without divine teaching?—without divine authority, what submission could it claim from the conscience? Who would sacrifice anything for an abstraction which possessed neither authority nor grace? Charles Lamb's description of the South-Sea House is a true picture of an Hoadleian Free Church. "This was once a house of trade—a centre of busy interests. The throng of merchants was here—the quick pulse of gain—and here some forms of business are kept still up, though the soul be long since fled. Here are still to be seen stately porticoes, imposing staircases, offices roomy as the state-apartments in palaces—deserted or thinly peopled with a few straggling clerks; the still more sacred interiors of courts and committee-rooms, with venerable faces of beadles, door-keepers—directors seated in form on solemn days, to proclaim a dead dividend."

Such have been the circumstances which have gradually altered the position of things in England, and have broken in upon that Episcopal System, which existed after the Reformation. If it suffered from the attachment of the Stuart divines to the Crown, it has suffered still more from the enmity of later divines to the Church. And now, then, we are in a condition to state, in conclusion, both what is the real nature of Erastianism, and how far it has impaired the constitution of the English Church. We have seen that God has combined mankind upon two principles—one that plastic nature

which dates from the creation, of which the institutions of civilized life are the result; the other, that Sacramental union, which had its origin in the recreation of mankind in Christ. The first was set in motion by God's natural providence; the second by His supernatural grace. The first expresses itself in that mighty mass of laws and principles, which make up the political inheritance of the commonwealth of nations; the second is that divine rule of faith and practice, which has been handed down by the universal Church. Now, it was charged upon Hildebrand, that on his principles the one of these systems would have absorbed the other, and that the independence of nations would have been surrendered to the Church. Erastianism is the exact converse of such a movement: it is the absorption of the Church by the civil government—the resolution of Christ's kingdom into a function of the State. In Erastianism the institutions of the old, swallow up those of the new creation; and nature triumphs over grace.

It is a painful and humiliating, but most necessary inquiry, how far this invasion of things sacred has taken effect among ourselves. It was stated at first that Church authority might be classed under the head of Orders, Mission, Patronage, admission to Communion, and custody of Doctrine. The first of these, the gift of Orders, has happily not been interfered with. But in every other department, the Church of England has been more or less driven from the ground which she occupied under the Episcopal System. Admission to Communion depends upon the action of her Ecclesiastical Courts;

and this is practically suspended as regards the faith and conduct of her lay-members. If the State had been contented to withdraw the civil penalties with which it had clogged all Ecclesiastical sentences, the Church's position would have been infinitely amended by the removal of sanctions, which were an impediment and not a succour; but the tendency of the Toleration Acts, has been to leave all their invidious character to Church censures, but to prevent the Church from pronouncing them. By 1st William and Mary, 18, the Church's Courts were disabled from declaring any one to be out of her Communion, in consequence of his being a dissenter. But the 68th and 140th Canons, which the Church has never been allowed to repeal, compel her to deal with every baptized person as one of her members, unless he is declared to be the contrary by some public sentence. So that if the State has not wholly usurped the power of admission to Communion, the Church's hands, at all events, have been so completely tied, that she has no voice in a question in which she is the sole competent authority. Yet a right use of Church Discipline is declared by our Homilies to be essential to the very existence of the Spiritual Community.

To turn to the case of Patronage. It has been stated that the Episcopal System fully recognized the principle of lay-patronage. But it was on the ground that Patronage ought to follow endowment, not on any inherent right of appointing the Church's teachers, which was vested in the temporal power. This would have seemed to touch upon the delicate question of Mission, and to imply that the civil ruler not only

possessed such authority over the persons of the clergy, as might inhibit or allow them to exercise their functions in a particular locality; but that it possessed the right of Spiritual Mission, and committed to its delegates the care of souls. And this would not only be a direct infringement upon the province of Christ's spiritual kingdom, but it would involve the right of revoking the spiritual commission, and, therefore, of judging respecting the doctrinal grounds, which justified its revocation. It is a most serious breach, therefore, in the ancient Episcopal System, that the appointment to Dioceses is vested by law in the Crown, even though they are endowed by private munificence.⁴⁵ The sacred offices of Christ's kingdom are dealt with, not as though they were brought into relation to the powers of this world by the temporal advantages which are attached to them (which is the principle of lay-patronage), but as though the spiritual function itself was conferred by the worldly power. The distinction becomes apparent, if we consider the authority which the Crown exercises in regard to the diffusion of any opinions of a scientific kind. The Crown has endowed Professorships in our Universities for the encouragement of different branches of human learning. Those who occupy them are in consequence selected by the Sovereign. But if any one wishes to teach Philosophy at his own risk, the Crown

⁴⁵ The present Colonial Secretary states himself to take the advice of the Archbishop of Canterbury, respecting Dioceses which are endowed by private Patrons. But this is only a voluntary act, in which he might or might not be imitated by any other patron.

claims no especial supremacy over his system of thought. It asserts its right to rule over his person, but challenges no control over his opinions. So long as they are personally peaceable subjects, the Crown allows the followers of Cuvier to teach Geology, without inquiring into the truth of his system, or requiring them to take out a peculiar license from itself. Now, why should there be an exception in the case of every one who exercises the office of a Bishop in the Church of God? His function is to be a perpetuator of that system of belief, which has been delivered down by Christ our Lord. Why should the Crown interfere with the teachers of this system, any more than with those who inculcate other truths, unless it supposes that the settlement of religious questions falls within its own province, and that those who promulgate them have some deputed authority from the State? To prescribe, then, that none shall be appointed to the office of Bishop except by the Sovereign, is to affirm the principle of Erastianism: it is to usurp the Spiritual functions of the Church of Christ.

But we need not confine ourselves to such general considerations; because within a few years there has been a clear and capital interference with that right of spiritual mission, which is inherent in the Church. The great safeguard of this privilege is the control possessed by the two metropolitans over the appointment of their suffragans. It happened that two persons were nominated at the same moment for consecration by the Crown, one of whom was publicly charged with denying the faith, the other with

a breach of morals. The two Primates were called upon to pronounce respecting the charges which were made, and either to acquit the parties or reject them. But what happened? The Primates instituted no inquiry, but proceeded to the consecration, on the ground, which was maintained by the law officers of the Crown, that they had no power to test the fitness of the parties, but were bound to bestow spiritual mission upon any person who was presented to them by the Crown. Here, then, there must either have been a gross dereliction of duty in the Church's rulers, or the rules by which her purity is defended must be grievously impaired.

But all these evils sink into nothing, when compared with that interference with the Church's doctrines which has since been witnessed. For the very ground of that jealous care which should be exercised over the *persons* who are employed, is lest those momentous *things*, with which the Church is entrusted, should suffer detriment. Her office is not only to minister to individuals the Sacraments of grace, but to hand down the deposit of the faith unimpaired. In this function the Church acts like a personal agent, and her witness is delivered not only in those written documents to which she requires her ministers to subscribe, but also in that oral teaching which is given by those whom she accredits. She has not only to make rules, but to see that her rules are regarded. The first is of the nature of a legislative act, and is effected through the public formularies which she sanctions. The second is of a judicial character, and depends upon

the individual exposition of her general laws. Now, where the legislative and judicial functions are both in action, the second is plainly subordinate to the first; because its conclusions are liable to be superseded by fresh enactments. But the legislative function is wholly in abeyance in the Church of England, because the 25th Henry VIII. 19, inhibits Convocation from taking any step without the license of the Crown; and that license has never been granted for the last century and a half. So that the judicial function has occupied the whole ground, and gives final utterance to the Church's judgment. For as Hoadly expresses it, "Whoever hath an absolute authority to interpret any written or spoken laws, it is he who is truly the lawgiver to all intents and purposes, and not the person who first wrote or spoke them."⁴⁶

Now this circumstance gives additional consequence to the 25th Henry VIII. 19, by which the decision of appeals was entrusted to the King's delegates. Yet though an arbitrary and dangerous power was thus committed to the Crown, there was reason to hope that it would be exercised in conformity with the statements, to which the Crown was a party, that the decision of doctrine rested with the spirituality. Nor was it otherwise till the Great Rebellion. But how does the matter stand now? The Acts of 1832, 1833, and 1840, have transferred the whole power of the delegates to the Judicial Committee of Privy Council, whose business is to advise the Sovereign, and the decision of all

⁴⁶ Wilkins's *Concilia*, iv. 678.

matters of doctrine and discipline rests ultimately with the Crown. This arrangement, effected unobserved, and, as it would seem, unintentionally, gave the final blow to the Episcopal System. The first case in which the new principles of Church government were clearly brought into action was that of *Gorham versus the Bishop of Exeter*. The point in dispute was only secondary in importance to the great question of Church authority which it tested,⁴⁷ for it was whether man's salvation is attained through those ordinances of grace, whereby he is united to Christ Our Lord, or through his own individual exertions. It is obvious that the Church would always answer such a question in one way, and the world in another. To say, then, that this question was not referred to the Church, but that it was referred to the civil power, is to say that the judgment was given in favour of the Pelagian alternative. The way had been prepared by those circumstances which have been described, but it was reserved for the year 1850 to see the Territorial System, or pure Erastianism, display itself in its full dimensions, and effect its full evils in England.

⁴⁷ It is stated by the Bishop of Exeter in his able Pastoral, that the direct effect of this judgment was only to transfer the right of Institution from the Bishop of the Diocese to the Metropolitan; so that the admission of an improper person was not owing to a defect in the law, but to the fault of its administrator. But then it must be remembered that the Court which gave judgment against the Bishop's interpretation of the Prayer-Book, and transferred the right of Institution to the Archbishop, is also (under the Clergy-Discipline Bill) the final Court of Appeal in cases of heresy. Whatever, then, may be the *direct* effect of this decision, its *indirect* effect (until superseded) is to convey a final judgment upon the general doctrine.

CHAPTER III.

THE CONSISTORIAL SYSTEM, OR THE EFFECTS OF
ERASTIANISM.

It has been seen what was that theory of the Royal Supremacy, which was introduced at the Reformation, and what was the gradual progress which moulded it into a new form. The Episcopal System has given way, both at home and in Germany, to pure Erastianism. It remains to observe the effects of the alteration in either country.

Now, to suppose that man's faith is to be taken blindly from the ruler, under whose control he lives; that each sovereign has a right to prescribe such a religion as he pleases, and that his subjects are bound in conscience to accept it, (which is the Territorial System, or Erastianism)—all this is so contrary to the first instincts of nature, that it is impossible that men should submit to it without reluctance. Those who receive the teaching of the Church, believe that she has promise of guidance from God's enlightening Spirit: but no such claim is even advanced by the parties who wield the civil

sword. On this ground, then, the Territorial System was opposed by Pfaff, the learned chancellor of Tübingen, who describes it as "that worst pest of the Church, a Cæsaropapacy."¹ In place of it he introduced what he called the Consistorial System. But this was only to disguise an evil which he had no power to cure. His theory was that the Prince's interference in Church matters was not derived either from hereditary right, or from territorial supremacy, but from the free concession of the people. The Prince, as the first member of the Church, had been allowed by its inferior members to exercise that authority which belonged to them in common. Here, then, comes in the notion that Church authority does not lie in the successors of the Apostles through the commission of their Lord—which was the theory of the Episcopal System—nor yet, as the Territorial System affirmed, in the Crown, but in the body of the people. Now, this power might be supposed to belong to the body of the people either by natural right, or by Divine institution. The last is the theory of Presbyterianism, which has prevailed in all Protestant countries where the Crown did not favour the Reformation; and those who have adopted it still retain (as in Scotland) their ancient hostility to the Royal Supremacy. But it was impossible for Pfaff to rest the Consistorial System upon this ground, because it was an expedient by which the power actually possessed by princes was to be accounted for; and its principle therefore could only be found in the natural right of individual judgment.

¹ *Origines Juris Ecclesiastici*, p. 336.

The Consistorial System, therefore, asserted Church authority to rest upon the mutual consent of men, when they entered into relations with one another as members of the same nation; and the Reformation was supposed to have been an era, at which this power had been entrusted by German Protestants, either avowedly or implicitly, to their princes. In this way did Pfaff endeavour to get rid of the odious charge of "*Cæsaropapacy*."

On the tendency of this system, as advocated in Germany, we need only quote the testimony of Stahl. "The Collegiate System is a result of the Rationalistic tendency. The removal of all higher and transmitted authority—the resting of all order and law upon the will of individuals—these are the characteristic traits of Rationalism. Although the founder of this system, therefore, was entitled to the utmost respect for his own personal religious character, yet the Rationalists have got possession of his system, with the consciousness that it is their own. Rationalism can adapt itself, it is true, to the Territorial System, by reason of its profaneness; but it cannot with full consistency adopt any other origin of Church authority, or any other form of Church government, than that which is offered by the Consistorial System."²

This assertion may be confirmed by the consideration that German Rationalism has been chiefly grounded upon a denial of the authenticity and inspiration of Holy Scripture. Now, on what foundation do either of these stand but the authority of the

² Kirchenverfassung der Protestanten, i. 3, p. 44.

Church? In Scripture itself there occurs neither a list of the works of which it is composed, nor an explanation of that inspiration on which their authority is dependent. They were not collected together during the lifetime of the Apostles, nor were they all received till several centuries after the Apostles had gone to their reward. And what is the exact meaning of the inspiration of Scripture—whether it extends to all which is written there, or only to its doctrinal contents; and in the last case, how that which is doctrinal is to be discriminated—all these are questions which admit of the subtlest and most interminable disputes. How great must have been the effect of depriving a nation, peculiarly speculative in its turn of mind, of a divine guide in this controversy! For herein lies the contrast even between Presbyterianism and the Consistorial System, that the first professes to proceed upon a divine commission, alleged to be bestowed upon the congregation at large, while the last rests upon that independence to which all men are supposed to possess a natural right. It is possible for the members of a voluntary association to affirm that none but men of personal piety shall be admitted into their communion, and then to claim for their united body the sum of that divine guidance, of which they suppose each individual to be severally possessed. But this theory is inapplicable to a *nation*, which must of necessity contain persons of various character, whose individual sentiments cannot be excluded from the general contingent of opinion; so that no principle can be referred to, as influencing the national mind, except

that common reason, of which all men are partakers. Let the Consistorial System, then, be laid down as supplying the general theory of Church authority, and the notion that the Church claims any divine guidance must be abandoned. Hence Semler,³ the founder, as Thomasius was the precursor of Rationalism, referred to the consciousness of every reader as the sole test of the inspiration of Holy Writ. And as the way had been prepared for Rationalism by an alliance between Pietist and Liberal principles, so the full effect of Erastianism has been to destroy the authority of God's Word, with a view of vindicating the religious independence of His creatures.

But to turn to our own country. It may seem extraordinary that a nation so jealous of their liberties as the English, should be content to renounce the most precious part of the heritage of men. For it has been shown in the last Chapter, that at present it rests with the Sovereign to explain finally what is the mind of the Church of England. And since Churchmen admit that "the Church hath authority in controversies of faith," they would seem bound in conscience to believe that, which proceeds from an authority which themselves acknowledge. It may be alleged, indeed, that the Sovereign's decision only affects those worldly interests which are bound up with Church offices. But this worldly side of Church matters is handled by those temporal courts of the realm, which do not profess to be cognizant of spiri-

³ For Semler's application of this principle, vide "Doctrine of the Incarnation," p. 519.

tual questions. The royal authority, when exercised in hearing appeals from the Ecclesiastical Courts, is not concerned with questions of property, but goes directly to the settlement of spiritual matters themselves. How can this be doubted, since it is plainly the Church's duty to correct erroneous teaching; and there is no question of any kind, which can arise in any court of the Church, which is brought for final adjudication to any other tribunal? So that either the Church herself exercises no religious authority, or religious authority is exercised by the Prince. For every authority which the one exercises in inferior processes, is exercised in the highest instance by the other. The legislature, while vesting in the Sovereign the whole appellate jurisdiction of which a patriarch could be possessed, lays down with fearful exactness the breadth of that authority with which he is entrusted. The words "‘Ecclesiastical Court,’ shall be construed to extend to such court as shall exercise the jurisdiction, or any part of the jurisdiction, exercised by any *ecclesiastical court*, or to be substituted for the same."—[6 and 7 Vic., 38.] It has been said, indeed, that the alliance between Church and State is a compact, in which the one agrees to teach certain doctrines, and the other to guarantee certain worldly immunities. And thus it is thought that the interference of the Sovereign is justified, on the ground that he merely seeks to verify the fulfilment of that which had been contracted. But this is scarcely a fair statement of the case. The State's compact with the Church was founded on the belief that she was a body endowed by God

with some peculiar right of judging in things sacred. This compact the State may terminate by withdrawing those worldly advantages which it has bestowed. The State has a right also to examine whether the Church has used its appointed methods for inquiring into the case, and has given its judgment with the authorized formality. But if the civil judge undertakes to decide respecting the spiritual question⁴ itself, he usurps functions which belong to another department, so that the independent existence of the Spiritual Society is virtually denied. To quote the words of Stahl in an analagous instance: "the decision of dogmatic questions is indirectly introduced, so that the case is plainly one of Cæsaropapacy in its application."

How does it happen that the English people acquiesce so readily in such an interference with the rights of conscience? Because, simultaneously with the introduction of the Territorial System, other changes have been going on, which have in a measure neutralized its effect. The assertion of the unfettered liberty of individual belief has made many persons indifferent through what means the Church

⁴ This is explained by Rechberger, *Enchiridion Juris Ecclesiastici Austriaci*. "If the question turns upon rights which are purely ecclesiastical, recourse to the Sovereign is then only allowable, in so far as the Ecclesiastical Judge, proceeding to violence, and overstepping the bounds of right, is understood to have injured the Appellant: in which case it is the office of the civil judge, in order that he may not touch at all upon the internal state, or merits of the case (as they are commonly called), merely to compel the ecclesiastical judge to observe that order of proceeding which is prescribed by the laws."—*Vide Report from Select Committee of Commons*, 25th June, 1816, Appendix No. 1, sec. p. 94.

expresses her judgment. If they felt bound in conscience to respect her decisions, it would be of some moment by whom they were made, but why should men feel anxious about the decisions of a judge, in whom they recognize no authority? Again, the power which was formerly vested in the person of the sovereign is now held in common among the king and the estates of the realm, and is exercised practically by the minister who has the confidence of the representatives of the people. While the determination of doctrine rests nominally therefore with the Sovereign, it depends really upon the popular opinion of the day. And this is exactly that arrangement which Pfaff suggested as accounting for the state of things in Germany; and which he called the Consistorial System. So that while the forms of the Territorial System have remained, we have passed in reality to that other order of things, which has been shown to be so intimately allied with Rationalism. The world in general, however, feels little repugnance at leaving the decision of religious questions to the sovereign power, because the sovereign power is virtually "their noble selves." The decision in Church matters on late occasions has avowedly been less influenced by the strict rules of law, than by a reference to public opinion; and thus the formal Erastianism of our position is made tolerable by that virtual deference to the public sentiment, which is the essential feature of the Consistorial System.

And yet, it may be said, the adoption of these principles has not led to that open infidelity, which

predominates in Germany. The more practical tendency of the English mind, not to mention other circumstances, may have kept us, by God's blessing, from such delusions. But Erastianism and Rationalism are in reality only two forms of the self-same error—a denial of the existence of any divine rule in the interpretation of religious truth. Take away the true principle of guidance, and a literary and speculative people will tend towards Rationalism; while a nation which is inclined to political combinations, and jealous in its maintenance of public order, will shape its public opinion into a guide for itself. Crude and chimerical notions will be more abundant in the first, but the second will be no less in danger of sinking into a cold and presumptuous confidence in its worldly wisdom. Thus does Christianity cease to be regarded as a historical system, delivered down to us by our Lord and His holy Apostles, and it is supposed that the nation has invented a religion for itself, and delegated teachers on its own authority; that it has sanctioned such sacred books as approve themselves to its own judgment, and such doctrines as are suitable to its habits and tastes. Now this is the very principle of Rationalism, and is not more false and dangerous when it misleads an individual, than when it affects a nation. Its necessary effect will be to lower things sacred to an earthly standard, and to set up the *national good sense* as an adequate criterion of the mysteries of faith. And there are two signal evils which this system has already introduced among ourselves, and which, if not corrected, may be the parents of

innumerable others. The want of a sufficient standard of doctrine leaves the laity without guidance: the inconsistency of their engagements is a burthen upon the consciences of the clergy. Both of these are great evils; to say nothing of those graver charges, which affect the Catholicity of the Church itself, and lead men to question whether her very commission be not compromised.

However simple may be the practical instructions of Holy Scripture, it contains also the deepest mysteries which can exercise the mind of man; and the impossibility of agreement among those who attempt to explain them by their own unassisted efforts is manifest from experience. No one, surely, can read the Athanasian Creed without perceiving that the truths which our Church holds to be deducible from Scripture are deep and mysterious. There are numbers of lay Churchmen therefore who would consider it a blessing to have some authorized guide respecting the momentous questions of doctrine, who feel that it is no advantage to be left to their own conjectures, in a case in which to err is perilous to their salvation. Are not such persons injured by that diversity in the judgment of the clergy, by which almost every town and every neighbourhood is perplexed? The very doctrines which are set forth as cardinal truths in one pulpit are denounced as capital errors in the next. For the dispute does not refer merely to secondary matters, but to the essentials of Christianity. "The Sacramental and Anti-sacramental Systems are two different religions, and to rest our hope of salvation on the one is to say

anathema to the other.”⁵ Our ancient laws assume the English Church to have been ordained for the very purpose of averting such a state of things ; it was intended that “the body spiritual” should “declare and determine all such doubts, and administer all such offices and duties, as to their rooms spiritual doth appertain.” And to this end it is said, “the King’s most noble progenitors, and the antecessors of the nobles of this realm, have sufficiently endowed the said Church both with honour and possessions.” These endowments still remain : the Church shows “her mitred front in courts and parliaments,” and her dignitaries are among the nobles of the land. Yet when the Church’s chief officer was recently referred to, he stated that he knew no means of settling these momentous differences ; and that each individual must help himself by his private efforts as he could. And no wonder, for with the independence of the Church’s judgment, all confidence in its authority must of necessity be lost. If our civil courts, instead of being administered by able and learned judges, were committed to men who had no claim to confidence, the people would lose their reverence for British law. And since our courts Christian have lost their independence, and the temporal power has stepped in to decide questions of faith, who can wonder if the Church’s decision finds no respect ? The want of justice in things temporal would soon tempt men to redress their wrongs by private violence ; and what wonder that religious

⁵ Sermons on the New Birth, p. 234.

dispute and dissension should abound, since her guiding office has been taken from the Church.

Again, the changes which have interfered with Church authority have involved the clergy in the most serious difficulty. Their solemn engagements have been rendered self-contradictory, and thus both their private peace is impaired and their public usefulness. Every clergyman engages at his ordination "to minister the doctrine and discipline of Christ, as this Church and realm hath received the same." How can this engagement be fulfilled, now that the Church receives this doctrine in one way, and the State in another? The Church's statements are the same which they were during the predominance of the Episcopal System: she still affirms herself to possess "authority in controversies of faith." But the State has lapsed into the Erastian System, and committed the settlement of doctrine to the Crown. Here, then, are two contradictory principles, and how is it possible to fulfil a promise, which binds men equally to both? What are men to believe on the question of Baptismal grace? In her public formularies the Church states positively that grace is bestowed in Baptism: but the legal authorities through which her voice is at present expressed, state not less certainly that this is an open question; so that we have no right to *affirm* that grace is bestowed in Baptism. Now, whatever may be thought of the Church's judgment, there can be no doubt that this settlement has been sanctioned by the courts of the realm. Either the Church, then, is committed to heresy, or

her purity must be vindicated by saying that her verdict is at variance with that of the State. And if so, how is it possible to minister doctrine according to their common decision?

It has been supposed by some persons, that by the Church's judgment they are not to understand a sentence which emanates from her spiritual authorities, but the common verdict of the mass of individuals, as it expresses itself in the public opinion of the age. This verdict, they say, is given by Parliament, and the Sovereign is authorized, as the highest member of the Church, to express that judgment, in which the rest of the body acquiesces. And thus the Church and realm can never be at variance. But this is an explanation which no consistent Churchman, and certainly none of the clergy, are at liberty to adopt. Their own courts enforce upon them the Canons of 1603, which profess to emanate from the "Synod at London:" and these Canons affirm "the sacred synod of this nation" to be "the Church of England by representation." The same Canons pass sentence of excommunication on all persons, "clergy or laity," who either deny the authority of "the said sacred synod," or the Royal Supremacy (Canons 140, & 2). Now, Parliament is the representation of about thirty millions of persons, of whom about two-thirds admit neither of these authorities; and how, then, can their united voice make up that Church, which has "authority in controversies of faith?"

Indeed, nothing can show more plainly the want of accordance between the rules which were enacted

under the Episcopal System, and their application, as at present understood, than the case of Royal Supremacy. It is frequently referred to by Dissenters as a rule, which they themselves are not bound to acknowledge, but to which they pay sufficient respect, by affirming that it gives to the Crown an absolute authority in the spiritual affairs of the Established Church. This may be the judgment of the State, but it is the exact converse of that which is affirmed by the Church. The Church does *not* admit that the Crown has absolute power over her members in spiritual matters: she *does* affirm that whatever power of this nature it possesses over Churchmen, it possesses also over all inhabitants of the realm. When the Royal Supremacy was restored to the Crown, the Episcopal System was in the ascendant: the ecclesiastical authority, therefore, was affirmed to be co-ordinate with that of the Crown; and the Royal Supremacy was not affirmed in any sense which interfered with the right of spiritual persons to judge of doctrine. This is admitted in Queen Elizabeth's injunctions, which the Act, 5th Elizabeth, 1., sanctions as an authorized interpretation of the oath. But while the Church does not affirm that the clergy are bound to accept the judgment of civil persons in spiritual questions, it does affirm, in the 11th and 140th Canons, that the Royal Supremacy, whatever it may be, is an authority from which no persons in this realm are exempt. And hence arises a distinct contradiction between her principles and those of the State. The Toleration Acts, wisely enacted by the State, permit Dissenters

of every denomination to legislate for themselves. The State allows Conference, without consulting the Crown, to make laws for the supreme religious government of the Wesleyans. But every clergyman is required by the Church (by the 36th Canon) to affirm that the Sovereign is "the only supreme governor in things ecclesiastical," and this statement is explained (Canon 12) to inhibit "any sort of ministers and lay people" from meeting together "to make rules in causes Ecclesiastical without the king's authority."

Now, hence arise a multiplicity of practical difficulties. A clergyman, for instance, finds that the 27th Canon forbids him to minister the Holy Communion "to any that have spoken against his Majesty's authority in causes ecclesiastical." He is bound in conscience, as well as by law, to obey the Church's command; and this particular command is one which his Bishop is bound by the express words of the 1st Canon to enforce. An avowed member of some dissenting community presents himself at the altar. Here, then, is a person whose very profession is that he recognizes an ecclesiastical authority, which is incompatible with the Royal Supremacy. Even if he calls himself a Churchman, yet the fact that he is a member of some tolerated religious sect is a sufficient disqualification. The case is directly provided for by the 12th and 27th Canons. If the minister, therefore, is to obey the Church's law, he cannot possibly admit such an applicant. The case is referred to the Bishop, and he decides that the Holy Sacrament cannot be refused, because the Toleration

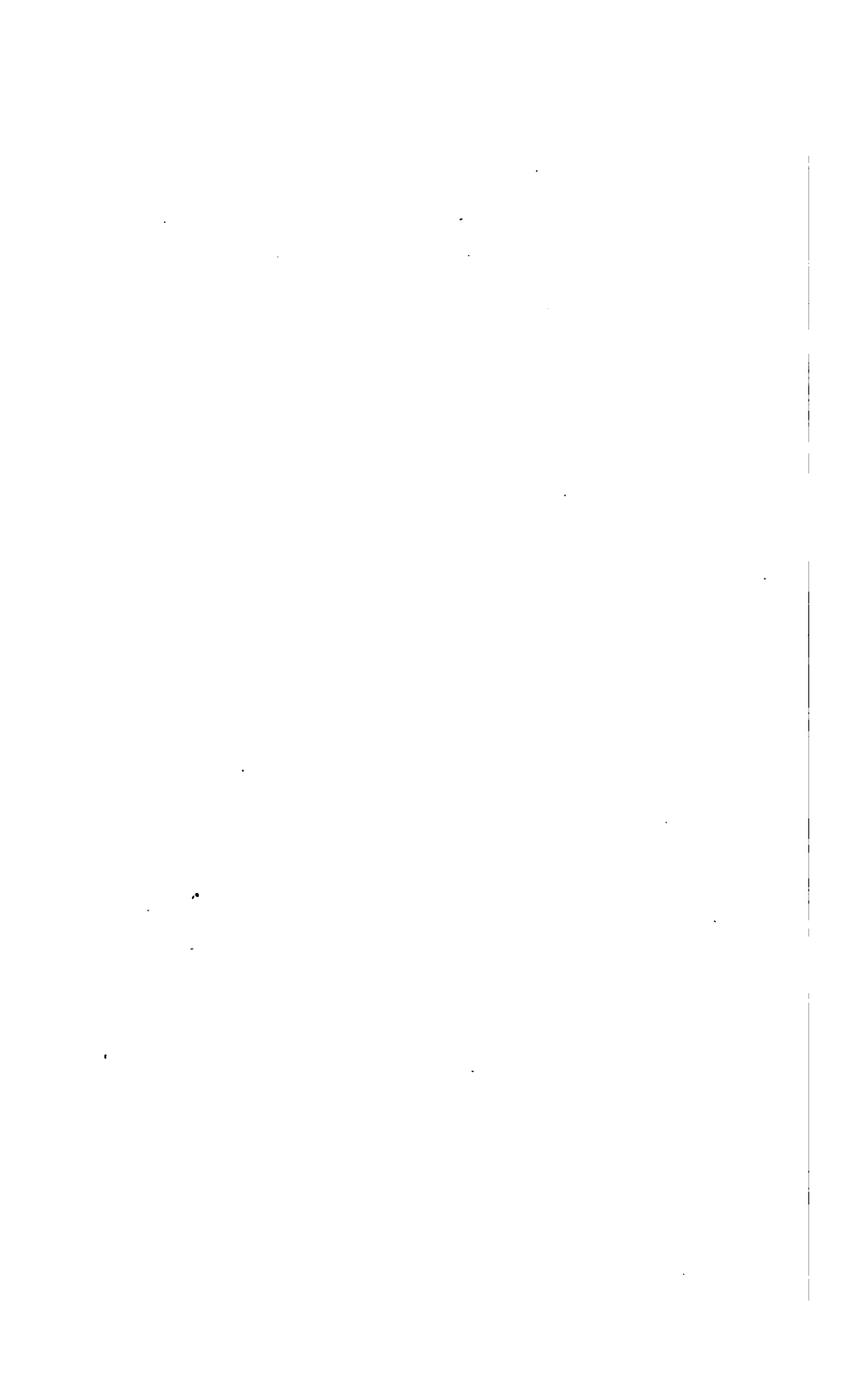
Acts give all persons permission to dissent. This is not a mere problematical case, but one of actual occurrence. And the majority of persons would probably say that the Bishop had acted rightly, and that the clergyman's objection was narrow and bigoted. Yet persons who have taken a solemn oath can hardly be blamed for seeking to fulfil it. The Church's rule may be inconvenient in the present condition of things, and the State may wish it altered, but so long as the clergy swear obedience to a religious law, they will naturally suppose that it cannot be superseded by any temporal enactment. At all events it is unjust to require that they should promise to obey two incompatible commands, which it is impossible to unite.

Again, the Church has provided a service for the burial of the dead, which is manifestly intended for those who have fallen asleep as Christ's members. She guards against its use in the case of others, by forbidding its employment in respect of those who die unbaptized or excommunicated. That every one who lives in open sin, or absents himself from the Blessed Eucharist, shall be formally excommunicated, is provided for by the most stringent regulations. But the Toleration Acts interfere with the operation of these last provisions, so that the absence of excommunication ceases to be any proof that the party is a Churchman. The clergy, therefore, are bound by the laws of the state to prostitute the Church's sacred and solemn words, by employing them in respect even to avowed infidels. So that here again the discipline of Christ is one thing as it is understood

by the Church, and another according to the order of the realm.

Such are some of the inconveniences of substituting Erastianism in place of that Episcopal System, which existed in the age following the Reformation. And what is to be the remedy for that mass of contradictions and inconsistencies, of which the change has been productive? There can plainly be no remedy but to alter our principles to our practice, or our practice to our principles. Shall the principles of the Church of England be altered? This will hardly be desired by its attached and believing members. And yet it may be said that in the present day, when so many persons in the nation are professedly hostile to the Church, any change in her practice may endanger the safety of her possessions. When the form of Government is popular, there can be no security, it may be thought, for the Church, unless it reflects all the phases of the national will. And a body which did not possess inconsistent and jarring elements could not harmonize with a nation in which such various opinions are predominant. So that to render the Church more homogeneous would be to deprive it of that peculiar characteristic, which induces the nation to acquiesce in its dignity and its wealth. Its Erastianism, men may say, is the very secret of its popularity; and since the nation contains incongruous elements, so must its ecclesiastical establishment. But such arguments will never be accepted by those who believe in the sacredness of truth, and recognize the authority of God. "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

The Church may be rich without worldly wealth, and its members revered without worldly titles, but if it abandons that Creed which was committed to its trust, or those Sacraments which it was embodied to minister, it will neither secure man's respect, nor God's favour.

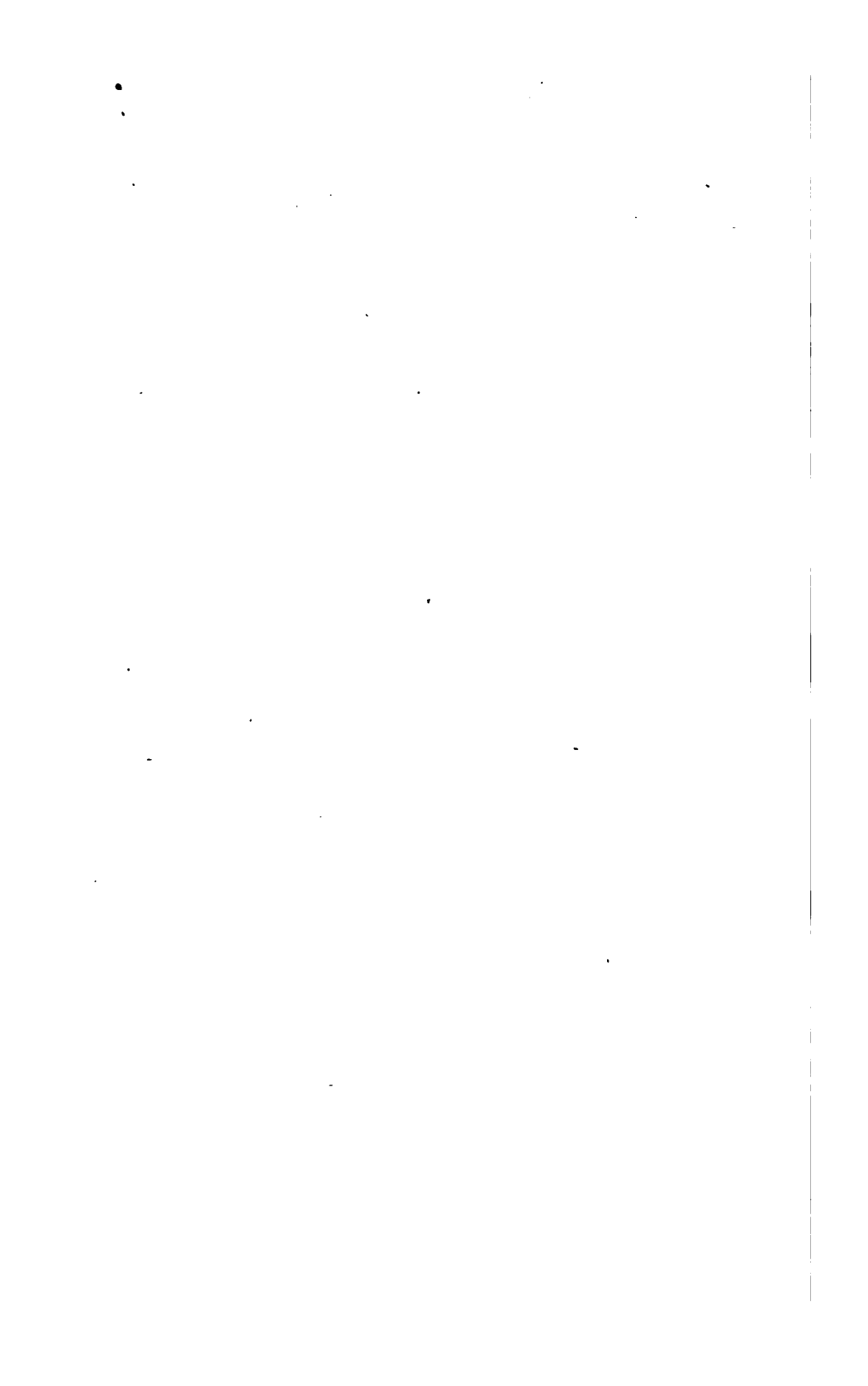


THE REALITY
OF
CHURCH ORDINANCES.

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH, IN ADVENT, A. D. 1850.



THE REALITY
OF CHURCH ORDINANCES.

GENESIS, ii. 17.

"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

THIS awful threat has received different explanations. Those who have understood it to be a denunciation of temporal death, have supposed that the promise of the Mediator delayed its execution. But since there is no statement that the sentence was suspended, the words of Scripture would rather lead us to suppose that death means something besides the separation of soul and body. And such we find to be the case from other passages of Holy Writ: "You hath He quickened, who were *dead* in trespasses and sins." And the Second Death is the name assigned to the state of final reprobation. Nor is this a mere accidental transference of a name from one evil to another. For earthly death is but the end and consequence of that state of things, of which

spiritual death is the commencement. So that this visible, is but the indication of that hidden, evil; and the same words which declared the entrance of the one, must have looked forward to the predominance of the other. And this, consequently, has ever since the fall been man's condition: "as soon as we were born, we began to draw to our end."

I propose, on the present occasion, to consider first the full meaning and consequences of this relation, and why a state of sin should be described as a state of death. This will lead us in the second place to appreciate more truly the reality of those blessings, which are communicated in the Church of Christ, and what are the benefits which were bestowed by *His* advent, who has overcome death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel.

I. To understand why a state of sin is a state of death, we must ask first, what is meant by sin. Now, we have a somewhat precise definition of sin in the third chapter of St. John's first Epistle. "Sin is the transgression of the law." ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία. On which words would seem to be built St. Augustin's celebrated definition in his controversy with Faustus; "Sin is any deed, or word, or wish, contrary to the eternal law."¹ The object of St. Augustin was to demonstrate that sin was not, as the Manichæans supposed, some *positive* part of man's being, but that its nature was wholly *negative*, that it lies in man's departure from that holy and perfect rule, which is indissolubly allied to the Divine perfections. "The eternal law," he says,

¹ Contra Faustum, xxii. 27.

“is the divine reason, or the will of God, enjoining the maintenance of the order of nature, and forbidding its violation.”

And this is the only account of sin, which can enable us to bring original and actual sin within the limits of the same definition. For if birth-sin were of a positive, and not a negative kind, if it were any substance or quality, which, in itself, had independent existence, its guilt would of necessity revert from him who possesses, to him who bestowed it. And thus we should fall into the Manichæan heresy, and suppose that a part of our nature had its origin from some evil principle, which had shared with God in the creation of mankind. Nor would the case be mended if, to escape from this hypothesis, we supposed with Calvin, that God was Himself the Author of the evil which He punished.

Sin then is a defect or lack of that harmony, by which man should be conformed to the perfect law of God. And birth-sin is the deprivation of some principle, by which this harmony should be introduced into our nature.

And this leads next to the inquiry, what this principle is, the want whereof renders our birth an entrance into a state of sin. Now if we inquire into the original condition of man, we find that those faculties of body and mind, which we now possess, were perfected by the higher gift of a Divine grace. This was essential to those functions, to which our first parents were appointed, and was comprehended in that likeness of God, which they are stated to have borne. So it is plainly supposed by the

Fathers who constituted that important Council of the Western Church, (the Council of Orange) which gave judgment against the Semi-Pelagians. "Man's nature," they say, "even if it had remained in that entireness in which it was created, could never have preserved itself without its Creator's help."

And this truth is involved in the first principles of Theism. For what is meant by belief in an Infinite Being, but the admission that there is one Mind in the Universe, to whom those things belong of right and by essence, which are bestowed as accidents and by gift upon others? And in this Being, if we believe Him to be a Personal Being, and not simple power—not the mere vital principle, which gives motion to matter—goodness must be as inherent an attribute as existence. For it is the very condition of Deity that His attributes are not an accidental adjunct, but make up the very essence of Himself. As to exist in Three Persons, so to be infinitely good, is the very law of His nature. Now that which is Infinite excludes aught of the same character, except as related to it, and as derivative from itself. So that to suppose man's original goodness to have been something independent of the succour of an indwelling grace, is to detract from the completeness of the Divine goodness, and therefore is incompatible with the infinity of God. And that such was the law according to which both men and angels were created, was the universal opinion of the ancient Church. "Their nature was not such by

creation," says St. Augustin, "that it could maintain itself without divine support."²

So that we may see what is that peculiar fault or deficiency, which renders our persons, so soon as they exist, unacceptable in the sight of an holy God. It is first the loss of that original righteousness, which belonged to those who were created in God's likeness, but which was wanting in those who were begotten by fallen Adam in his image after his likeness. And secondly, as consequent upon this, it is that war of appetite against reason which is called concupiscence. Not of course that these evils were wholly unrelieved by any remains of God's image; or that the influence of the Divine Word was ever wholly withdrawn from the beings whom He had created. Man was still a responsible being, and the world was still a state of trial; and it was only so far as men were without Christ, that they were without God in the world. But that which was lost was the crown and excellence of man's nature, that likeness of God, which would have fitted it for the immortal state, for which it was designed.

And this may enable us to form a more just estimate of sin, and to see why Holy Scripture identifies it with death. For if we look at sin in its essence and not in its consequences, we shall find it to lie rather in the separation from that Being Himself, who is the Author of perfection, than in any mere deviation from the laws which He has enacted. For since law is God's will, and the ultimate source of

² "Non talis natura facta erat, ut sine divino adiutorio posset manere."—*De Correctione et Gratia*.

all has a *personal* existence, the very evil of sin lies in its arraying men against that perfect Being, who is the centre of the moral universe. And hence the profoundest thinkers have made it the characteristic of heinous sin, that it takes the creature as the ultimate object of desire instead of the Creator. Such is the definition of deadly sin which is given by Aquinas, and which is founded on the statements of St. Augustin. This was the evil of idolatry: men worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator. Now, if the intensity of sin lies thus in separation from the Creator, we see at once why Scripture should identify it with the death of the soul. For the soul's life is in God; on the Infinite alone can all finite beings cast themselves for succour and direction; and to be separated from Him is to be cut off from their source. The true principle of attraction is destroyed, and chaos resumes its empire over the moral world. For "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." "And this is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

II. We may pass now to our second topic, and go from the nature of sin to its remedy. As the death of the soul is its separation from God, so in union with God consists its life. And thus are we led to the contemplation of that true Sun of Righteousness, of whose Advent we are again reminded. For as Theism is the declaration not of a *system* but of a *Being*, so the Gospel is the revelation of a *Person* and not of a *law*. Herein lies its distinction from

all other systems by which the world has been instructed. Moses was the inspired lawgiver of a nation; the impostor Mahomet proclaimed one great truth—the unity of God; Plato forecast the soul's eternal existence; Socrates dug into the deep foundations of morals—but all these did but extend the limits of thought, or reveal the ordained laws of God's government; to abolish death, and gain the victory over sin, was the work of *Him* alone, who came into the world as a Personal Saviour. For “the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

Thus was “God in Christ reconciling to Himself the world.” And therefore, as the present season reminds us, the Gospel was built on events, and not on discoveries; not on that which revealed the condition, but on that which changed the constitution of mankind. Nor yet were the incidents on which it was founded such as altered the aspect of nations: they had no apparent connexion with the march of civilization, nor the destinies of empire. Its commencement was acted in the stable: its consummation was effected on the cross. Thus were those secret purposes achieved, on which depended man's salvation, and whereby a new creation superseded the old one. Here, then, is something diametrically opposed to all other influences which have modified the position of mankind. Whereas others have laid down new rules, Christ was the beginning of a new

race; others have been distinguished by the nature of their systems, Christ by that of His Person. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and Truth *came* by Jesus Christ." For if the evil of sin be the division which it effects between man and God, if separation from Him be the soul's death, then must the true remedy be in that merciful act, whereby God has graciously reunited Himself to our nature. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the Fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person—by *Himself* purged our sins."

Such, then, is the nature of sin, and its remedy. It is that separation from God, which is the soul's death. The remedy is that reunion with God in Christ, which is the soul's re-creation. Now, this view of man's condition throws light on many subjects of deep interest. Let us consider it in reference to the doctrine of Justification. Justification is a term which expresses that process, whereby sinful man is accepted by his offended Maker. When man came forth originally from his Maker's hands he needed no justification: he was already acceptable in the sight of the perfect Being who created him: "God saw every thing which He had made, and behold it was very good." But it was otherwise when God saw "that every imagination of man's heart was only evil continually." Man was no longer acceptable in God's sight. Now, justification

is the process, whereby men pass from the one state to the other. And if we ask through what means it is brought about, Holy Scripture refers us to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ Our Lord upon the Cross, as the only meritorious cause through which it is accomplished. For "God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." And "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." This was no mere concession to the opinions of men; nor dare we affirm, with Socinian writers, that God's estimate of His creatures underwent no real change by this mysterious propitiation. For the sacrifice of the Son of Man was an actual work, which altered the position of the world. "Having made peace by the blood of His Cross," He reconciled all things unto God.

But although the merits of Christ were large enough to take in the whole race of which He vouchsafed to become a member, yet it is confessed that all will not profit by their efficacy. What, then, makes the difference? why is it that some men are not, while others are, acceptable to God? Does the cause lie in Him or them; in His decree or their conduct? To affirm the first with Calvin, to suppose that the circumstance which limits the efficacy of Christ's blood, and excludes a portion of mankind from justification, is an arbitrary decree passed beforehand by the Almighty, would be to impeach God's justice, and to deny the responsibility of man. The discriminating circumstance, therefore, must be sought not on the side of God, but on the side of

man. For "God will have all men to be saved." Justification, then, depends not merely on an external act, which was wrought once for all upon the Cross for all mankind, but likewise on some internal acts, which discriminate between one man and another. These acts are described in one word by the name of *faith*. "God hath set Him forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood." And "being justified by faith we have peace with God."

But what is meant by justifying faith? For it is not every kind of faith which has this efficacy. It is not the mere acquiescence of the intellect. "The devils also believe and tremble." What, then, is that quality or circumstance by which a living or efficacious faith may be discriminated? The Apostle tells us: it is a "faith which worketh by love." And since love can result only from the influence of grace, the same principle of grace must be essential to faith also. And so says St. Paul: "by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." And again, "peace be to the brethren, and love with faith from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." So that in this process of justification grace is an indispensable prerequisite; since without it there cannot be that principle of love, by which living faith is discriminated from that which is dead and ineffectual.

To understand the doctrine of justification, then, we must go higher, and inquire what is that principle of grace, which is essential to the life of faith in the soul. Now whence comes grace? It has its beginning in God, it is nothing else than the love of God

in action. From that native seat it flowed forth into the humanity of the Word made flesh as into its proper dwelling. "We beheld His glory," says St. John, "the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This is all which we read of grace in the Gospels. Its further course was to fill the whole body of the Church, in which it was shed abroad by the Blessed Comforter. This is recorded in the Acts and the Epistles, which tell us that "great grace was upon them all." Thus is the agency of the Three Blessed Persons in the Holy and Undivided Trinity set forth in the Doxologies of the Church. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." So that justification requires that influence of God's Spirit, whereby the Incarnate Word communicates grace to His members. "We, through the Spirit," says St. Paul, "wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."

And therefore our acceptance with God requires two things—one, something objective, something which is common to all mankind: the other something subjective, because it is that by which one man is discriminated from another. The first was that sacrifice of Christ Our Lord, which was wrought externally to us, "for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." The second is that work of Christ which is effected internally by the power of the Holy Ghost in each regenerate mind, whereby love is infused, and faith endued with living efficacy. "By grace are ye saved." Now, of these two things, which go together in the

work of man's acceptance, the first speaks plainly of an imputed, and the second of an imparted, gift. When God is "in Christ not imputing unto men their trespasses;" this is to refer to that sacrifice upon the Cross, on which remission of sins is exclusively dependent. But when those who are "justified by His grace" are made "heirs according to the hope of eternal life," this is to speak of that "renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

And this brings us back to the immediate subject before us. For why is it that these two operations are so intimately allied; and that the one cannot be attained without the other? It is because the evil of sin is its separation from God, and because this evil cannot be cured without re-union with Him. It is because this re-union can only be obtained through that Son of His love, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood." It is because "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." So that Gospel faith is a belief in Christ, not in Christianity. It is the acceptance of that Person, "whom God hath exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." And since He is thus a Personal Head to the new race of His redeemed brethren, we cannot plead the efficacy of His sacrifice, save through the efficacy of that grace which originates from Himself. "For if being enemies we were reconciled to God through the *death* of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved through His *life*."

And thus it is that the whole work of Christ Our Lord hangs together. It is impossible to separate it into its technical ramifications, and say that the justification of man depends on one part of it and not on another. For the forgiving and renewing operations of Christ Our Lord are bound together by the personal oneness of Him who effects them. "You, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." If the Gospel had been a law like that of Moses, or a philosophy like that of Socrates, we might eliminate those portions of the faith which are not essential to salvation. But such a process is excluded by the personal nature of Christian belief. Its object is that God-man, who is made unto us "wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." So that there can be no opposition between His different acts, but only between *His* acts and those of others. The true contrast is between divine merit and human merit; and between *faith*, whereby we lay hold on the first, and *sense*, whereby we take note of the second. To oppose faith to grace or to human merits, would be to contrast together terms which are not correspondent; for to be saved by faith is nothing more than to be saved by Christ, *i. e.*, it is to rest our acceptance upon Divine merits, not on human; upon faith, not on sense; upon grace, not on nature.

Now, all this is involved, when we say that our hopes are not founded upon the adoption of a system, which derives its efficacy from the feelings which it

excites, but from the acceptance of a Saviour, who renews us through the grace which He infuses. Thus does the nature of that remedy which is provided for sin, determine the nature of the process, whereby its evils are averted. Man's fall was his separation from God, the re-union with God is his rising again. This blessing began in Him, who came to be at once a sacrifice for sins past, and a fountain of grace for time to come. So that the gift whereby grace is infused, is identical with that whereby pardon is imputed. And man's acceptance is not brought about through a technical compliance with an artificial system of requirements; it does not depend on admitting a well-balanced proportion between an ideal guilt and an ideal forgiveness—it is the actual re-creation of man's race by Him to whom it owed its original existence. Was man truly separated from God by sin, was this separation from God a real death, have the purposes of his being been thus defeated—it has pleased God, through the Son of His love, to provide for the redress of these calamities by a remedy as real as the evil. To be in Christ, is to be accepted of God; to be out of Him, is to be in a state of death: justification, therefore, is that complex process, whereby we put off the old man and put on the new one.

Now, this subject leads of necessity to another; from the question of justification we naturally turn to those instruments of our union with Christ, the Holy Sacraments. What is it which they effect for man? How is their purpose affected by the consideration that the life of man's soul is the presence of

God; that it is death to be separated from Him? That Sacraments are of no benefit to the ungodly is admitted on all hands; or rather that unworthy receivers purchase to themselves condemnation. But what are they to the worthy receiver? Now it has been said that justification is that process whereby those who are out of favour with God are brought into it. But to be out of God's favour is death; to be in it is life; for His love is as creative as His word, and quickens things which are not as though they were.

This is a real change, then, which men may no doubt obstruct by impenitence or unbelief, but which no power of their's would be able to effect. God's grace and favour is not like an ocean, where men may stoop down and help themselves; it is like His gracious rain from heaven, which cometh down upon the just and upon the unjust. The first was the notion of the Pelagian; it supposed that Christ had accumulated a fund of merit by His death, which men must apply to themselves, by their own inward act, for their salvation: the second is the notion of the Church, which supposes that the merits of Christ must be applied to each of us externally through the Holy Sacraments. As really as He took our nature in the Virgin's womb, must His nature be communicated to each one of us in the new birth of Baptism. And that renewed nature, which was implanted in Baptism, must be sustained in the Holy Eucharist.

Hence we see the extent of that blessing, of which Baptism is the medium, even to infant receivers.

Of its two gifts—forgiveness and grace—some have called in question the completeness of the one, some of the other. But how could either of these gifts be bestowed upon children, unless they were made members of Christ; and if they are made members of Christ, what heavenly gift is there of which they are not partakers? Can we limit the holiness of the Word made flesh? Can we question the acceptance of those who are found in Him? Are not His merits large enough to cover all whom He adopts: is not His grace mighty enough to renew all whom He incorporates? Can *those* be dead who are living members of the new Adam? For “know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates?” “And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.”

There can be no limit, then, to the completeness of that gift which is bestowed in Baptism, although it is a gift, which is bestowed upon responsible beings, who, like their first forefather, may either reject or renounce it. For since the evil of sin, whether original or actual, is, that it separates men from God, since we are re-united to God in Christ, and since “those who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,” therefore forgiveness is obtained through that very act, whereby men participate heavenly graces. It has been disputed, indeed, how far original sin can be said to be entirely done away in Holy Baptism. Now birth-sin has been stated to be first, the loss of that supernatural gift of which our original parent was possessed, and secondly, the consequent war of appetite against reason, which is

called concupiscence. The first of these evils is plainly remedied in that ordinance of Baptism, wherein we "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him." As respects the second, we must discriminate with St. Augustin, between its guilt and its power. The first, as he expresses it, is taken away in Baptism, but not the second. "*Concupiscentiæ reatus in baptisate tollitur, sed infirmitas manet.*"³ For Baptism is the entrance into a state of life, not its consummation. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." But then, as the same Father reminds us, though concupiscence be present even in the regenerate, as the consequence of past sins and the cause of future ones; yet it does not provoke God's displeasure against them in *itself*, but only through those *acts* of sin which it engenders. Concupiscence taken by itself, though a part of original sin in those who are in a state of nature, yet in those who are members of Christ is a weakness and not a crime. Sin commences only when concupiscence leads men to disobey that ruling principle of grace, whereof by Baptism they became the possessors.

This is what St. Augustin affirms in his treatise against the two Epistles of the Pelagians. And to quote St. Augustin, is to refer to the judgment of the ancient Church, of which, on this subject, he was the acknowledged expositor. His statement, then, is, that concupiscence is called sin, not because it is properly sin in *itself*, but because of the sin from

³ Retractions, i. 15, 2.

which it springs, and which it engenders. And again, he says, that though it is inherited by all who partake the old birth, yet that it is so completely remitted in Baptism as not to hurt those who partake the new birth. "Concupiscentia in Baptismo sic dimittitur, ut quamvis tracta sit a nascentibus, nihil noceat renascentibus."⁴ And with this accords the statement of our own articles, which is opposed, therefore, to that of all the Puritan confessions. While the Scottish Kirk, for example, affirms, in the words of the Westminster Confession, that concupiscence is "itself truly and properly sin," our Article reminds us only that "the Apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin." Such a difference might naturally be expected between those who suppose that man's nature was truly re-created in Christ, and those who look upon His death as only conferring a technical immunity from the penal consequences of transgression. And hence their different estimate of the efficacy of Holy Baptism. For if the death of the soul be truly its separation from God, then must union with God be *really* its life.

And this may lead us, in conclusion, to two practical results, one affecting our belief, and the other our conduct. It has been shown that the primitive doctrine respecting sin and grace has a clear coherence with that which was anciently entertained respecting justification and the Sacraments. Now, it will be found that the notorious contrast between the primitive and the modern

⁴ Contra duas Epistolas Pelagianorum, i, 27.

theory, on the two last points, has its ground in a corresponding contrariety respecting the two former. It is because they fail to perceive that sin is truly done away by the grace of Christ, that the Calvinist and the Rationalist deny their due place to the Sacramental instruments of our justification. For the characteristic distinction between the two systems of Calvinism and Rationalism and that of the early Church, is that the two former theories suppose that the work of Christ was only to change the estimate which was formed of men, whereas the Primitive doctrine supposed that Christ's work was also to change *man himself*. The Calvinist and the Rationalist differ, because the first supposes that Christ's death makes a difference in the estimate which is formed of man by God, the second, that it only alters man's estimate of himself. But the Primitive System includes both of these opinions, because it teaches that a real alteration in man's estate is bound up with the new estimate which is formed of him. The Calvinist supposes our Lord's sacrifice for sin to be an arbitrary and isolated act, for which he finds no explanation save in his own *a-priori* estimate of the Divine attributes, and which would be equally intelligible if our Lord had assumed the nature of some other being, or had created for Himself a body without reference to any existing race. The Rationalist, rejecting so harsh a supposition, adopts that which, if more consonant to reason, is less accordant with Scripture, and alleges Christ's death to have been only an example, and to have been designed only to reconcile man's conscience to

itself. But both the one and the other suppose man's nature to have remained what it was. Sin on either hypothesis is not *cancelled*, but only forgotten. The Calvinist is led by Scripture to attribute this to the merits of Christ: the Rationalist, on grounds of reason, assigns it to the mere goodness of God. But in either case sin remains what it was before: it is still a part of our nature, unless man can get rid of it by his own independent acts, or unless God removes it by some subsequent process. What is this, then, save to assail *that* system in its results, which those who denied the Deity or Humanity of Christ or their hypostatic union, so long ago denied in its principles? For the ancient Church supposed that a real change took place through Christ in man's nature; that Christ was in truth a new "beginning of the creation of God." It had no need, then, to account for Christ's sacrifice by reference to the unrevealed attributes of God; the death upon the cross had a just though mysterious relation to that whole chain of acts whereby the Second Adam was set forth as the healer of those ills, which had been inflicted by the first. Thus is our Lord's atonement for sin ever spoken of in Holy Scripture, which, without entering into those secret reasons which made such an act indispensable, sets it forth as the crisis in that divine work which the new Head of mankind effected. "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear

of death were all their life-time subject to bondage."

Now, this is to represent the event whereby sin is destroyed, as the self-same through which pardon is imputed. And since regenerate man is man still, therefore sin, as St. Augustin maintains, must be the perversion, not the substance of his nature.⁵ For it could not otherwise be done away by that infusion of grace, whereby men are "translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." So that the doctrinal controversy turns on the amount of that difference which was consequent on the Advent of the Redeemer. This lies at the bottom of all disputes respecting what are called Church principles, and respecting the efficacy of Sacraments. Did Christ come to perform a real, or only an imaginary work? Did He alter only the estimate, which was formed of man, or did He alter man himself? Did He merely change his relations or re-create his nature? What is St. Paul's answer? "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." For "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but the new Creation."

And this leads to one practical observation. It has been stated that the guilt of sin is forgiven to those who are joined to Christ by His sanctifying Spirit. And yet sin still retains a noxious influence, both upon their bodies and their souls. For "though there be no condemnation to them, which believe and are in Christ Jesus," yet each man

⁵ Op. Imp. con. Jul. iii, 176.

brings with him into the world the effects of that disorganization, of which the first man's sin was the original cause. And this inward weakness gives an opening to that external foe, who lies in wait for us, as he did for our first parents. Now nothing is more common than the feeling that this evil is one, which we must contend against at some period of our lives, but against which we can equally contend at any period of it. And especially is it common for the young to put off the struggle, in the hope that temptation will become less powerful, and circumstances less seducing. Brethren, this is nothing else than Satan's lie to our first mother, "thou shall not surely die." For the supernatural gifts of grace put each baptized Christian upon his trial, as much as our first parent. Each of us is the subject of a new creation, and the trial of each individual is as much a contest between heaven and hell, as the trial of the race. What will result if Satan be allowed to repossess the house, which has been swept and garnished, but that seven other spirits, more wicked than before, will enter in and dwell there? Would that men would realize this truth; and feel that habits of devotion, and a perpetual walk with God, are the very condition of their soul's life. Would that they would see that the freshness of grace, like the freshness of nature, has a blessing and a privilege peculiar to itself. Would that they would remember that riot and sensuality are a living death both to the body and the soul. For the gifts of grace are not less applicable to the sanctification of men's bodies than to the renewal of their souls.

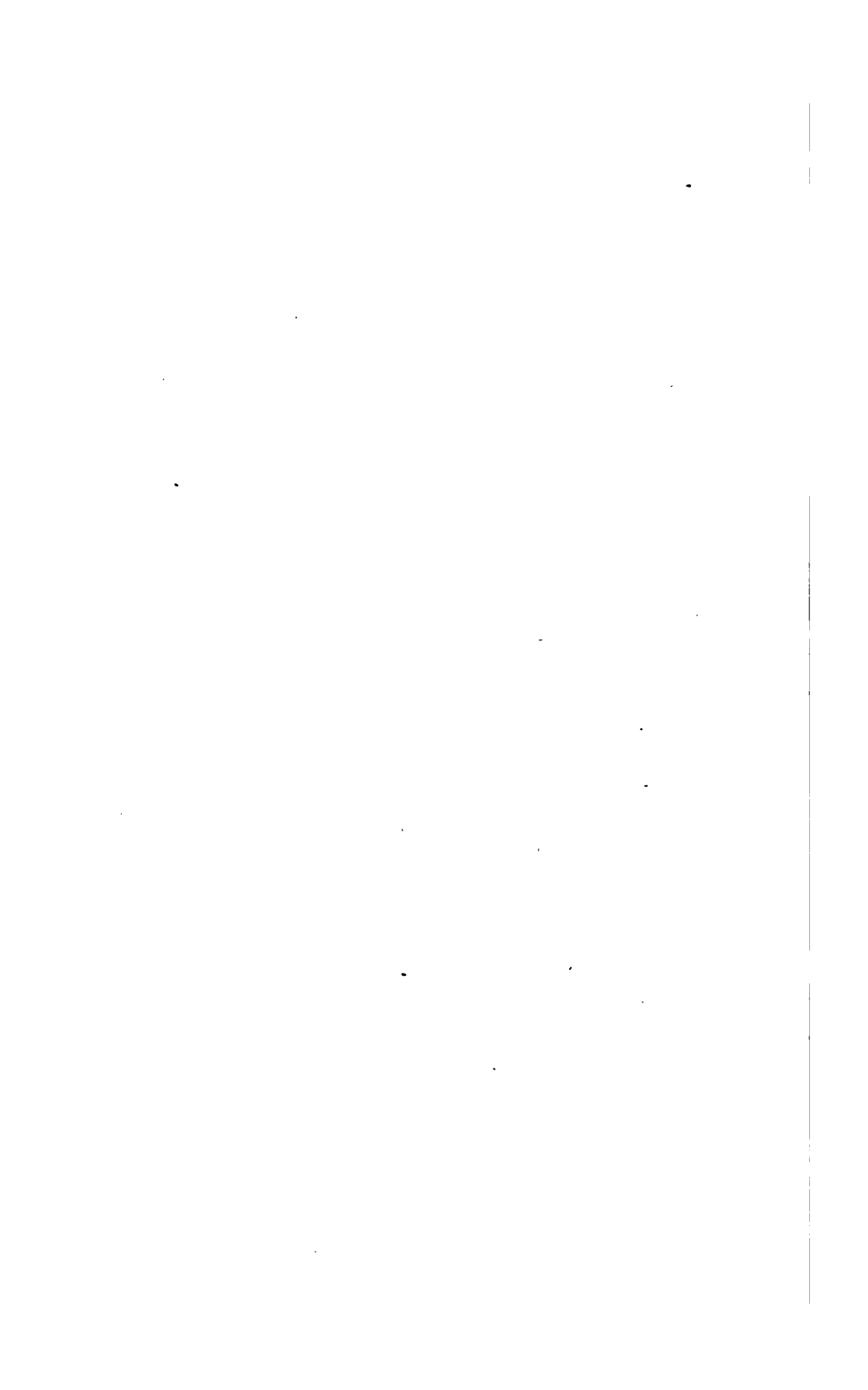
The Son of man took our whole nature, both in body and soul, that by sanctifying all, He might become the source of sanctification, both in soul and body, to all believers. As completely, then, as He bore our nature, must we bear His, and the sins of the body are not less fatal to the spirit's life, than the disorders of the soul. For purity does not consist merely in excited feelings, and in the aspirations of the mind; but in self-control, self-denial, and practical obedience.

THE PRINCIPLE
OF
CHURCH AUTHORITY.

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH, SUNDAY, MAY 18, 1851.



THE PRINCIPLE OF CHURCH AUTHORITY.

I. CORINTHIANS, ii. 15.

*"He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet He himself
is judged of no man."*

PERHAPS no passage of Scripture is received with greater hesitation by cautious reasoners, because it seems to supersede argument, and to dispense with inquiry. It cannot be denied that this, and such statements, have in all ages been the favourite weapons, both of the enthusiast and the impostor; and there is scarcely town or village in which they are not used at present as grounds for rejecting that interpretation of God's Oracles, which has been received by His holiest and wisest servants. The spiritual man claims to be believed on his own assertion, while his own assertion is the sole proof that he is spiritual. Such pretensions from persons whose lives give no claim to deference, are so revolting to sober men, that the Scriptural statements

themselves are regarded as dangerous; like those border fortresses which are demolished by common consent, lest they should be occupied by the enemy. Yet not only are these the words of the inspired Apostle of the Gentiles, but still stronger statements are made by that other divine teacher who reveals the deepest mysteries of the Kingdom of God. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie." And such expressions harmonize with that longing for some principle of guidance, which is deeply rooted in the heart. We can classify and catalogue the material treasures of mankind, we can estimate how far in each special department they have availed themselves of their physical resources, and made nature subservient to their wants. And is the higher region of thought and intellect to be vexed for ever by unsatisfying contentions: are systems of belief to follow one another like the waves of the deep, without umpire and without end? Is there no test of moral and religious truth—no criterion for interpreting God's Word?

Let us consider, then, whether there be not some principle on which these passages admit of a safe and profitable interpretation; such as may at once allay the apprehension of sober men, and satisfy the yearnings of distracted hearts. And first let us inquire by what means men explore the deeper mines of natural thought. This will supply us with

rules, which we may apply, in the second place, to the richer soil of supernatural knowledge. Thirdly—let us observe how these rules are recognised in the principles of our Church, and in the practice of our country.

We begin, then, with the test of truth in God's natural kingdom, that it may aid us in appreciating those principles on which we should interpret His Word. Now there is a certain amount of natural knowledge, which is a necessary preliminary to the reception of Revelation. For "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Here are two things laid down, the existence of God, and the principle of duty; the discernment whereof is a prerequisite for the admission of divine truth. And that such has commonly been the case is attested by experience. The belief in God's existence pervades all nations: and the most logical of ancient philosophers adduces the existence of praise and blame as a fundamental proof of the responsibility of man.

Now, by what means are these principles arrived at? When infancy opens its eyes upon life, its first knowledge is derived from surrounding objects. The impressions thus acquired may be recalled, repeated, and combined, but they only represent the objects from which they are drawn. The senses are the instruments of the body: the body is our organ of communication with the material world: it can lead us no higher, therefore, than the world of sense; it cannot supply anything abstract or divine. From whence are these last

notions obtained? As the body is our organ of communication with the sensual, so is the soul with the immaterial world. What is the soul's instrument in acquiring knowledge? Is it the process of reasoning? The process of reasoning is but that orderly arrangement of our thoughts which shows the results which are involved in them. An argument is legitimate, when the conclusion is implied in the premises. So that reasoning revolves upon hinges, and not upon wheels; it cannot move forward and enlarge our stock of materials, but answers only the important purpose of explaining that which we have amassed. It is an intellectual account book, which tells us our wealth but does not augment it. No rules would enable a sculptor to produce a statue unless he was possessed of the material out of which it was to be shaped; and unless we were provided beforehand with the conceptions of God and duty, no system of logic could create them.

Whence, then, are these notions derived? Since they are possessed but not acquired, it remains that they must be the mind's original heritage—a part of that image of God which was not altogether lost with the innocence of our first parent. The conceptions of God and duty are primary, independent conceptions, not formed by combination, or conclusion out of other materials, but part of the original basis and structure of our thoughts. They may be dormant till circumstances call them forth, but when called forth they approve themselves to the consciousness or intuition, as the processes of reasoning do to the mind. Duty is not a modification of expediency

or the result of calculation, but a primary intuition of the heart : and the notion of God is not formed by abstraction from inferior beings, but is the archetypal consciousness of an Infinite and Self-existent Cause.

Our natural knowledge, then, is communicated to us by two organs—the body, which through the avenue of the senses, opens upon the material world; and the soul, which, through its powers of consciousness and intuition, holds converse with the abstract and unseen. The materials thus supplied are moulded by reason; which analyses each individual notion, and generalizes by abstracting from the compound perceptions with which it is entrusted. Hence results a store of thoughts, which are fixed by language, and laid up by memory, and are capable therefore of being handed down by one generation to another, as the intellectual heritage of the children of men. Its marts are the schools of science: its traders the great thinkers of every age.

Now, the question arises, is this intellectual wealth the property of individuals, or that of the community at large: is each man to think for himself, or should he be guided by the judgment of collective humanity? Copernicus is applauded for disputing the judgment of all his predecessors: and the properties of the hypothenuse have not become more certain, because Euclid has been believed for 2000 years. Yet it was felt to be a valid argument against Hobbes and Helvetius, that to deny the reality of moral obligation was to contradict the primary consciousness of men. Why was this, but because while reason has its appointed province, there are also primary condi-

tions, antecedent to argument, which are based in the intuitive perceptions of mankind? And to call these in question is felt to be treason against the constitution of our race. So it was deemed even among the heathen; whom sympathy led to conclusions, for which they could not account. For there is a sympathy in human souls: the propositions, which are set down calmly in the closet, gain thrilling interest, when we bring them forward, to those whose common acceptance attests their truth. And history might partially account for this, when, led by her handmaids, Geography and Philology, she suggested the possible unity of the human race.

For it was ignorance of this great truth which prevented the heathen from discerning the full authority of the intuitions of the mind. Since God has made of one blood all nations of the earth, those judgments which are written in the consciences of our race are attributable to Him. We may reverse an argument by which Aquinas infers the unity of God from the community of the moral sentiments; and say that the authority of the Creator, when once admitted, gives sanction to those moral intuitions which He is found to have impressed upon our collective race. The tendency of matter is to individualize, so that the impressions which are conveyed through the material senses are of necessity individual and detached: but since mind connects us with the One and the Infinite, since it has a relation to that parent mind, which is common to us all, its primary knowledge is derived from a higher source, and those intuitive convictions, which can be shown

to be the common heritage of our race derive their authority from its Creator.

We can award its due then, both to the judgment of individuals, and to the judgment of the race. To individuals belong the logical process of determining those results which are included in admitted premises, and the perceptions which they derive for themselves from the world of sense. But those intuitive judgments of the mind, by which we are brought into relation with the abstract and unseen, are the common testimony of man's race, and require to be authenticated by his collective judgment.

II. And now then let us mount up from natural to super-natural knowledge, from the old to the new Adam, from the kingdom of nature to the kingdom of grace. For there is an higher union than that of this world, and a sympathy which rests on deeper principles than common descent. It is founded on that great event, whereby God Himself condescended to renew the human family, when the Divine Son of Man became the true "first-born of every creature," the fresh "beginning of the creation of God." For the new race which was built upon Christ Our Lord, has its history, objects, and laws, no less than the old one. Those who are members in Him are truly united into a family, and its principles are not less capable of determination than those of the natural family of man. We have seen, then, what are the objects of knowledge in man's natural state, and how he becomes acquainted with them: let us ask the same questions respecting this higher family. What

are the objects of its knowledge; and what the processes by which that knowledge is attained?

The knowledge of God and duty ripens now into the fuller conceptions, first, that God is in Christ, reconciling to Himself the world, and secondly, that love is the fulfilling of the law. The first contains three vast but connected doctrines, which extend throughout the whole of the unseen world. One is the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity in Unity: that the Godhead has existed from eternity as an object to itself—Being, Wisdom, and Love—without limit and without end. Another is the doctrine of the Incarnation, that the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity, God the Word, took man's nature, that He might be the channel of union between the Creator and His creatures. A third is the doctrine of the Church and Sacraments; the appointed means whereby His Mediation is effectuated. And so too does the notion of duty ripen into a higher principle, when morals are understood to be no abstract and arbitrary rule, but to grow out of the attributes of that perfect Being, in whom truth and love have a personal existence. For "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

With this difference in the objects of knowledge, there must be a difference also in the principle, on which it is appropriated. And here we observe one grand contrast, that natural knowledge began by observation, but divine by communication. The stock of intuitive judgments was gradually accumulated by the labours of philosophy; but the Gospel

rose at once, as a light to mankind, in the Advent of Christ. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." And that which belonged to Him of right and by nature, He communicated, through the teaching of the Holy Ghost, to those inspired servants, to whom were revealed the secrets of the unseen world. Thus was given to man the treasure of the Gospel. Now through what processes is this treasure appropriated? We have seen that there are three instruments, which are employed respecting natural knowledge: sense, whereby the body communes with things external; intuition, which performs the same functions in respect of the soul; and reasoning, whereby we marshal our thoughts. Now the new family is made up of the same individuals who constituted the old one: their identity is not destroyed, though their capacities are exalted. There is no change, therefore, in those organs of sense, whereby each individual holds intercourse with the material world, nor in those processes of reasoning whereby he analyses his thoughts. The difference arises when we come to the gift of intuition. For this is not a mere private and personal endowment, but is part of the common treasure of the race. The change, therefore, which affects the family of man, affects that principle of intuition which pertains to him. And, like the father of the faithful, as it alters its nature, it changes its name. For what is intuition but natural faith, or faith but spiritual intuition? *Faith*, then, is the intuition of the renewed nature, whereby the Christian communes with the mysteries of God's unseen kingdom.

"Faith is the realizing things hoped for, the putting to the proof things not seen."

And now then we may go on to the further inquiry, by what test or principle are the conclusions of faith to be authenticated? Individuals continually differ in their most positive assertions: that which one affirms to be intuitive truth is declared by another to be obvious error; we require some rule or law, whereby we may ascertain what is the spiritual consciousness of the members of the second Adam. The authority of natural intuition was deduced from the history of our race; in history also must we seek for the expression of this higher principle. The annals of the Christian family will show in what manner its judgment was originally expressed. Subjects of the deepest importance were agitated in the early ages of the Gospel—subjects which affected those mysteries of the faith, which are the first object of Christian instruction. How were these disputes determined? They were concluded by the authority of those, who by office were successors of the Apostles. The claim was built upon Our Lord's promise, that He would be with His disciples even to the end of the world. This was understood to be spoken not only to the holy Apostles, but also to their successors the Bishops of the Church Catholic; who formed the connecting links of the whole Christian body, and in their collective capacity represented their Lord's presence even to the end of time. His guiding grace, the living principle of His mystic Body, which had first dwelt in fulness in His Apostles as a gift of inspiration, was understood to

dwell as a gift of interpretation in the collective episcopate. This was a point on which the ancient Church was as well qualified to give evidence, as any other on which its verdict is accepted. Do we accept its judgment, that the Epistle to the Hebrews, or the Revelation of St. John should be admitted into the sacred Canon; and can we deny the verdict, which it had previously pronounced, that the most sacred doctrines were to be understood according to that view of truth, into which the Holy Ghost guided its collective Fathers?

That the Son is of one substance with the Father is the very test of true doctrine; it expresses that momentous fact, upon which depends the reality of the Christian system, and whereby God and man are bound together through the Personality of Christ. Yet at the Synod of Antioch this form of words was disapproved, by those, whom none doubt to have been sincere believers. Sixty years afterwards came the great Council of Nice, and gave shape and body to that conception of the Christian mind, which before had been only an undefined intuition. From that day to this, to deny the consubstantial unity of the Father and the Son has been an acknowledged heresy.

Again, that the Holy Ghost is God, is affirmed in the Athanasian Creed to be part of that Catholic Faith, which is essential to salvation. Yet St. Basil's celebrated work on the Holy Ghost, while it contains those premises which would naturally result in such an assertion, refrains purposely from expressing it; and he is recorded to have practised the same reserve in

his sermons, that he might not shock those, who were not prepared to ascribe the name of God to the Third Person, though they shared in the Church's reverence for the Holy Trinity. But this reserve ceased, so soon as the Council of Constantinople had inserted in the Creed that the Holy Ghost is with the Father and the Son together to be worshipped and glorified; and when other Synods had ascribed to Him in express words the incommunicable name. Thus did the intuitive conception of the Christian mind become fixed in authoritative expressions. The results of private thought and individual reverence acquired a form and shape, when they were embodied in dogmatic words by those who had authority to enjoin them. As the moral instincts of nature assume a new character when common consent has stamped them with the authority of laws, so that instinctive feeling with which Christians regarded the mysteries of the unseen world was matured by the Church's judgment into the *Catholic Faith*.

Now this may suggest to us in what manner the assertion of our text should be guarded. For what is it, but that which we meet with in other departments of knowledge? The man of taste claims to be listened to on his own assertion; yet what proof can he give, save his own assertion that he possesses taste? The same principle is recognized by Aristotle in the department of morals, when he refers us to the judgment of the prudent man (*φρονιμος*) as a guide in conduct. For we need a criterion, by which to test the pretensions of those who claim to be

leaders. We have seen where this criterion is to be found :—in that common consent, which corrects the vagueness of individual impressions. When we touch upon those deeper principles, by which the mind elicits the primary laws of truth, the judgment of individuals is always to be subordinated to that collective verdict of mankind, which speaks with the united authority of the race. This judgment may not always be easily attained, but if it were impossible to attain it, there could be no certainty respecting natural truth. And this would be contrary to the irresistible conviction of our minds : “reason,” says Pascal, “refutes the Dogmatists, but nature refutes the Pyrrhonists.”

And the rule, which is applicable to things natural, is applicable also to things divine. As common consent is the test of the one, so the Church’s judgment is the test of the other. It supplies those conditions, under which the individual reason and private spirit may have scope and exercise. They are safe, when subordinated to the general principles of the Church’s faith, as the common sentiment of mankind is the best check to individual eccentricity in taste or morals.

The spiritual man therefore, to whose judgment St. Paul refers, is not the individual, but the collective Christian. He does not mean that each man may believe what he chooses for himself, but that each is safe, while he holds that which is accepted of all. There has been one only individual of the human family, whose single judgment might dispense with the aid of external counsellors. The Head of the

renewed family alone possessed in Himself all that light, which in their measure He bestows upon His brethren. For "in Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." In others the spiritual judgment is developed only through communion with Him; and their union with Him is through acceptance of the common faith, and inherence in the common body. For it is only as members of the family of Christ, that men can claim the promise of the Spirit. And without this help each one is too weak to grasp the truth, and his view too limited to embrace it. "For I Thy servant and son of Thine handmaid, am a feeble person, and of a short time, and too young for the understanding of judgment and laws." "Give me wisdom that sitteth by Thy throne, and reject me not from among Thy children."

And hence is supplied an answer to the objection, that to recognize Church authority is to interfere with the full exercise of personal responsibility. It is plainly the duty of each individual to do that, which he believes to be right, and to profess that which he believes to be true. Now it is alleged that a restraint is put upon the free exercise of these principles, if a Divine guidance has been bestowed upon the collective Body of Christ, whereby it is aided in the appreciation of God's will. But how is truth arrived at? We have already seen that the organs through which it is acquired are either bodily sense, or mental intuition; and that the materials thus obtained, are digested and arranged by the process of reasoning. Further, we saw that those intuitive powers, which took cognizance of

natural objects, were the property of the family of Adam; while the family of Christ had received as a peculiar gift, that higher wisdom, which was the correlative of the supernatural and the divine. Here, then, are three principles, sense, reason, and faith, each of which in its proper line is independent and irrefragable, because each is the instinct of nature, and therefore the voice of God. And why should our responsibility be more fettered by the one of them, than by the others? Why should the dictates of faith interfere with conscience, more than the impressions of sense, or the conclusions of argument? So long as each confines itself to its proper sphere, its testimony cannot be rejected. The Church's authority does not interfere with the observations of sense, or the inferences of reason; its province is that spiritual intuition which pronounces upon doctrines. And its witness is as conclusive in declaring the faith, as that of logic in explaining our ideas, or that of sense in communicating phenomena.

Reason, for instance, unfolds those relations which are built upon the definitions of unity and of number. It shows us that the idea of the threefold and the one are not identical. But it is not incompatible with that doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, which is revealed to us as the basis of the Christian Faith. For this doctrine does not contradict reason; it does not teach that the ideas of the one and the threefold are to be confounded; but that the Infinite is above the comprehension of finite beings, and that He has been pleased to reveal to us as the fundamental mystery of His nature, that He

exists in Three Persons as One God. The Church makes no attempt to explain this mystery according to the rules of reason, as though it might be shown to be involved in previous principles admitted by our minds : but neither is reason contradicted, when it is affirmed that in the unity of the same Divine Nature are Three Consubstantial Persons.

Again, as there is a province for reason, so there is for sense. When we partake in the Blessed Eucharist, that which is given, taken, and eaten, to the senses, is nothing but bread and wine. Its material aspect remains wholly unchanged : no chemical analysis to which it could be subjected could detect the slightest difference in its physical structure. But faith teaches another lesson. By virtue of the words of consecration, the sacred elements become other than they were before. The Incarnate Mediator has vouchsafed to make His man's nature the mean of union with Himself. This He does through the Holy Eucharist, wherein His Body and Blood are truly and really present under the form of bread and wine.

And not only have sense and reason a province in which they are severally supreme, but, in their place, they concur and contribute to the advancement of faith. Sense guaranteed the Gospel miracles, and thus challenged attention for its teachers. And the reason of individuals has often moulded those positions, which were afterwards taken up into the higher region of faith by the judgment of the Church. Thus did Theophilus, of Antioch, bring the term Trinity into her service in the second century ; thus

did Origen introduce the tenet of our Lord's Eternal Generation, and of His human soul in the third; while, in the fifth, the great Augustin vindicated the laws of grace against the Pelagian opponents of Baptismal regeneration. But such truths acquired a new character, when stamped as doctrines by the Church's authority, and enrolled in such documents as the Athanasian creed. Can any one tread his way through that majestic formulary, excluding at each step two contradictory errors, and not feel that its workmanship shows the highest of human faculties, while the subject-matter itself is superhuman and divine?

Now, from this we may advance one step further, and, as we have seen the true nature and office of Church authority, we may see likewise wherein Rationalism consists. It has been shown that there are two several families, of which the heads are Adam and Christ. From the first are inherited those gifts of intuition, which discover things natural: things supernatural are attained through that spiritual intuition which is derived from the second. Natural intuition must be exercised in subordination to the testimony of humanity; spiritual, to the testimony of the Church. The first has its origin in that plastic power which appoints our nature; the second, in that Pentecostal gift of the Holy Ghost, by which the whole Body of Christ is animated.

Rationalism, then, is that system of opinion which puts the first of these principles in place of the second. It does not positively reject religion, or disown Scripture, but recognizes no higher criterion

than the judgment of mankind and the principles of nature. It supposes that the mass of men are competent in themselves to arrive at truth, because, through the multiplicity of opinions, opposite errors will eliminate one another. And, therefore, it either denies Inspiration altogether, or denies at least that principle of Divine guidance, which is the necessary correlative of Inspiration. In the first case, it supposes the contents of Scripture to be discoverable by natural reason; in the second, it supposes the Canon of Scripture to be fixed by feeling or criticism; not by that guiding Spirit, which directs the Church.

Thus does Rationalism dethrone and destroy that presiding principle, which unites the Body of Christ into one organic whole. For Church authority has been shown to be no arbitrary rule, but the result of that indwelling grace, whereby the religious intuitions of individuals are matured into the Catholic Faith. We arrived at it by inquiring what principles regulated the acquisition of natural knowledge. While sense and reason belonged to the individual, the more precious gift of intuition was shown to be the property of the race, and to be held therefore in subordination to our common nature. We then ascended to the higher region of revealed knowledge, in which the judgment of the Church took place of that of the family of Adam. So that we were able to give its due place to that divine wisdom, for which the Rationalist would substitute the authority of nature. It supplies a criterion, which restrains individual presumption, while it gives freedom and confidence to believing hearts. And thus we have a rule, which

provides for the difficulty suggested by the text, without violating the other principles of man's nature.

III. Two parts of our inquiry, then, are completed: it remains to consider how far this rule is recognized by the principles of our Church and the practice of our country. These principles might be considered, as they bear on her relation to other portions of the Church, or on her relation to her own members. But time forbids to speak of more than the second of these, and that in the most summary manner. What, then, is the Church's office towards her children, according to that religious constitution, which was imposed at her present settlement upon the Church of England? How is the individual related to the general mind? The interpretation of doctrine is plainly asserted to depend upon a Divine gift, inherent in the general Body. "*The Church hath authority in controversies of faith.*" And this authority was not only claimed by the Church of England, but practically exerted. For she not only requires all who teach to allow the "Articles agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces, and the whole Clergy," but in her fifth Canon she declares that persons who assert them to be "in any part erroneous," are guilty of a "wicked error." Here is plainly an exercise of that authority, by which we have seen that the intuitive judgments of individuals were moulded into the doctrines of faith. And this power has been committed, as of ancient times, to the Church's rulers. Our public law

divides the nation into spiritual and temporal persons, and adds that those who discharge spiritual functions, "are usually termed the English Church." So that those, by whom its verdict is pronounced, are the parties to whom is committed the common authority.

It may be objected, perhaps, that the reference to Holy Scripture in the sixth Article, is an appeal to a higher tribunal. But allowing, in the fullest manner, that Scripture is the rule of faith, the question remains, by whom Scripture is to be interpreted? Are we to refer to the individual, or the collective mind? Is one the judge or the other? Authorities are cited both by judges and advocates: in which character does the Church act when she refers to Scripture? A judge declares on authority his interpretation of the law; an advocate attempts to gain acceptance for his interpretation of it by argument. But the Church produces no arguments. She does not even refer, like the Westminster Assembly, to those texts which substantiate her positions. She gives judgment that her creed is to be accepted as conformable to the will of God. It has been disputed whether Aristotle believed in the principle of a moral sense. Why, it is said, has he not more plainly affirmed it in his treatises on Ethics? It would have been superfluous to do so, because his works assume such a principle, as much as a work on grammar the existence of language. And it was needless for the Church to claim that interpretive office, which, by the fact of giving judgment, she actually exerts.

This office, then, the Church discharges in delivering the testimony of truth to her children. She does it as well by prescribing those general laws which are to be observed by her ministers, as by superintending their individual execution. In one case her function is legislative, in the other judicial. For these are only special applications of that general principle, by which all communities are governed. They are necessarily inherent in the sovereign power, which expresses its will not only by enunciating general principles, but also by providing the detail of action. *Ejus est legem interpretari, cujus est condere*. When the two processes are simultaneous, the legislative is plainly the higher function, because the last enactment supersedes previous decisions: but till laws are altered, their meaning is fixed by the last decision of the sovereign power.

Such is the theory of the Church of England, as exhibited in her laws, but such is *not* the practice as illustrated by her actions. It would be difficult to find a more glaring contrast than between the prosperity of her apparent state, and the misery of her real situation. She claims to be the depository of a Divine truth, which she has a superhuman commission to deliver; but the worldly power has in reality taken possession of her frame, and gives expression to its will through her organs of utterance. She claims to be the salt of the earth, and she is in reality trodden under foot of men. This is the result of causes long in progress; but its consummation was the transference of the right of deciding respecting doctrine from spiritual to civil rulers;

from those who possess authority in Christ's spiritual kingdom, to those whom God's providence has invested with natural power. No question of doctrine, however fundamental, can at present come into discussion in any Court of the Church of England, in which the civil power would not finally interpret, explain, and define the will of God, and require the Church's officers to give effect to its interpretations. And since the legislative powers of the Church are held in abeyance by penal statutes, its whole action is concentrated in that judicial department, of which it has been thus despoiled.

It may be alleged, indeed, that this is no new injury, because the right of nominating judges has long been in the Crown, and because the Crown's authority in all causes and over all persons, has long been acknowledged. But the power of the Crown to appoint judges was qualified formerly by that admission, to which itself was a party, that the settlement of doctrine lay with the Church. The Crown, it was supposed, might be trusted to select spiritual judges, because it made formal admission that the temporal power had no right of judgment in itself. Here, therefore, is no sanction for enactments, which rob the Church of its inherent rights, to vest them in the civil magistrate.

Again, the Oath of Supremacy affirms that no department of human affairs is exempted from the control of the civil governor; but it does not affirm that the civil power supersedes those functions which belong to Christ's spiritual kingdom. Two families have been shown to exist among men—the family of

nature, and the family of grace; the one tracing its origin to the arrangements of God's natural providence, the other to the gift of the Holy Ghost; the temporal power being the exponent of God's natural law, His spiritual Presence being embodied in the Church. In the middle ages the spiritual had encroached upon the rights of the temporal family, and its members were exempted from that control, which the State has a right to exercise over all its subjects. This exemption is formally surrendered by all spiritual persons in the Oath of Supremacy. They admit that no person and no society in the land is exempt from the controlling superintendence of the State. The master of a family has a control over all its members, and may object to the introduction of practices and combinations, which he disapproves, among the inmates of his house. But if he allows some art or language to be learnt, with which he himself is unacquainted, it would seem strange that he should claim to be arbiter in a department in which he had no knowledge. The Sovereign is supreme in a University, but he does not require its schools to refer to him the more abstruse questions of philosophy, or claim to be the final judge in science or art. The mysteries of religion only, and the divine laws of the kingdom of Christ, are referred to those who do not possess the qualifications needed to decide them.

And observe the effect of this intrusion upon sacred functions. It interferes with that law which has been shown to be a fundamental principle of the Church of Christ. It takes, as the ultimate judge

in questions of doctrine, a human in place of a divine authority. The properties of the individual mind remain as they were before, but when we ask for that guiding principle by which the intuitions of individuals are combined and directed, instead of a power which claims divine, we find one which claims human origin. Now, this was shown to be the fundamental principle of Rationalism. For Rationalism likewise is the substitution of nature, as the final criterion, instead of grace. Like Erastianism, it supposes that the impressions of men are to be moulded together merely by a natural rule; and that earthly wisdom and authority is a competent judge in matters of faith. Hence the fantastic reveries of the speculative German. Among our own countrymen, more inclined to political combinations than philosophic theories, the same tendency assumes a practical shape. They claim to dispense with that historical system which conveys to us the Church's judgment, because they have a sufficient criterion of truth and falsehood in their national good sense. The English people is too great to need any help in the settlement of its religion: it is able to elaborate a creed for itself out of those ancient documents, in which it is its will to place confidence. It will no more be dictated to in religion than in politics or in taste: and the people's mind will be reflected by the judgment of its rulers.

So that Neology is a literary, and Erastianism a political, Rationalism. For in either case the principle is identical. It is the substitution of human wisdom for a Divine commission. Those principles

which are admitted to be supreme in the family of nature, are asserted to be supreme also in the family of grace. So that we have no higher rule than natural reason, and there is an end of those deeper mysteries, which were wont to be accepted as the Catholic Faith. This system is as fatal to the Gospel as the neological speculations which have reigned in Germany from Semler to Strauss. Have they not one end as well as one origin? Their origin is the denial of that supernatural principle, which discharges the same office in the system of revelation, as collective reason in the family of nature. And the loss of this principle of Church authority will be followed by a gradual abandonment of those doctrines, which it was its office to maintain. Revelation must sink down to the level of natural reason, if that principle is abandoned, which is competent to deal with the mysteries of faith.

It may be thought that the faults of individuals, rather than the dangers of the Church at large, should be noticed in the pulpit. Yet what can be more material than that a malady which taints the sources of our common life, and perverts the fundamental principles of our Church, should be understood and appreciated? And where should it be noticed, save among those whose office is to set the tone of public sentiment, and whence the springs of thought flow forth throughout the land?

Yet let us not conclude without one word respecting those personal acts, by which each man may directly mitigate the national dangers. The diseases of the body need not only the surgeon's knife, but

also that confirmation of the general health, which may enable the frame to support the crisis. The Church is an organic whole, but among her special functions of life are the piety of individuals, and their prayers. What time, then, calls more loudly than the present for daily prayers, and weekly Sacraments, and for private intercession, and for the graces of a holy and self-denying conduct? Thus may men invigorate the Church's life in the hour of common danger: thus may they gain that comfort and guidance which may sustain themselves. "Come, My people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

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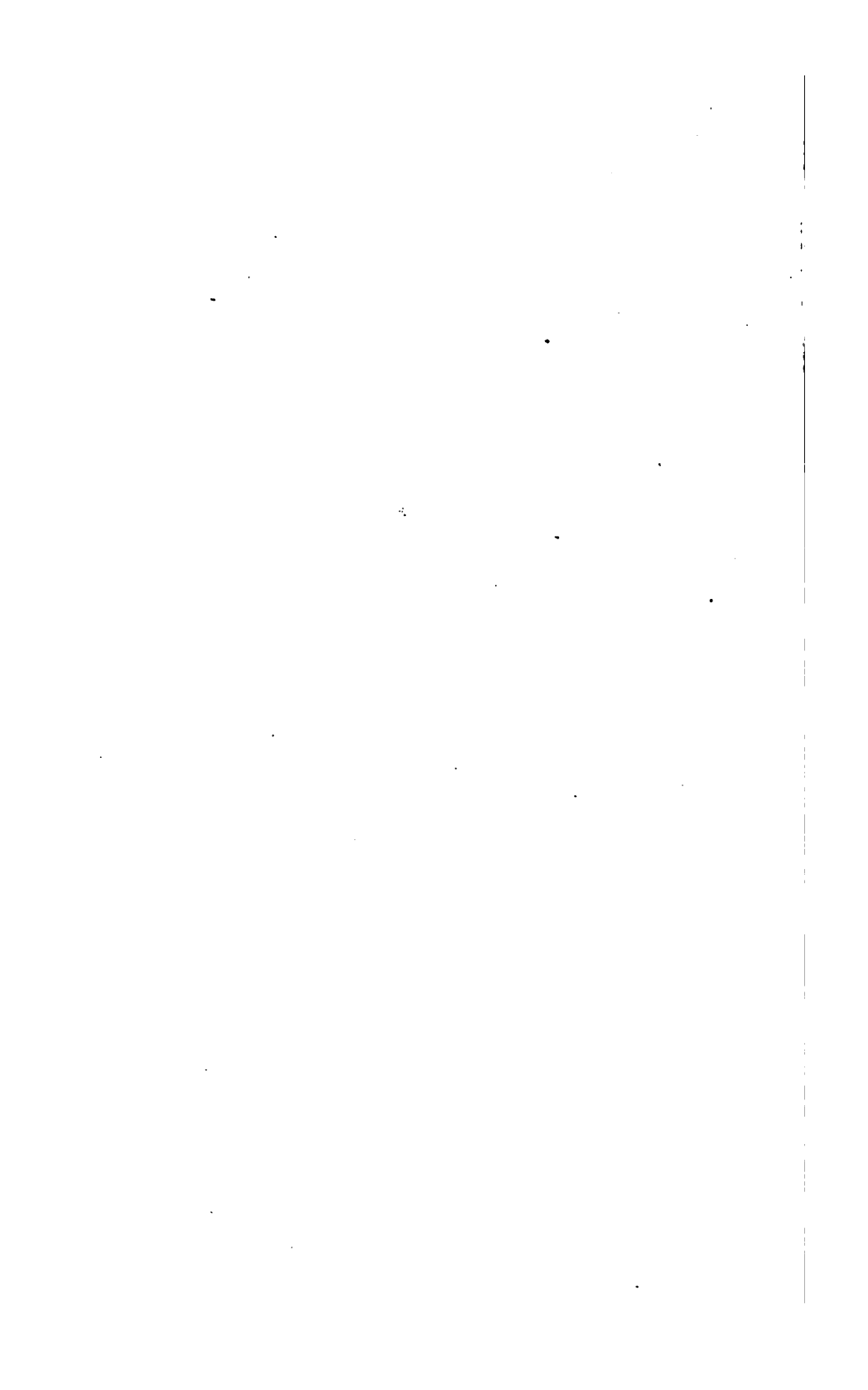
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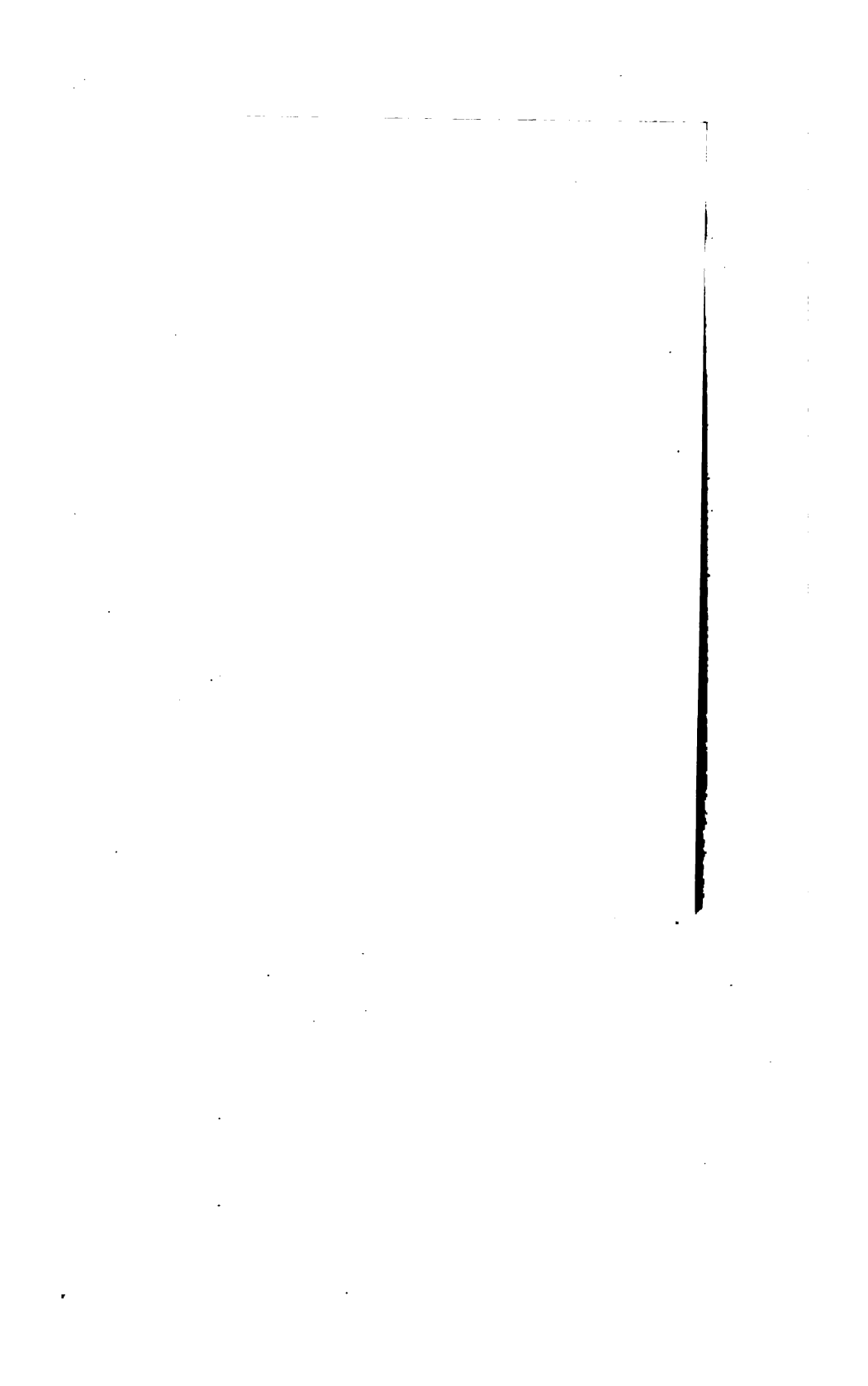
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